





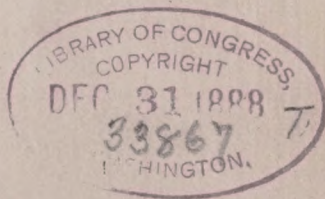
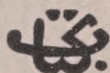
AN ERRAND GIRL:

A

ROMANCE OF NEW YORK LIFE.

BY

EVELYN KIMBALL JOHNSON.



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42 DEY STREET, N. Y.

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AN ERRAND GIRL.

CHAPTER I.

A VISIT TO POVERTY ROW.

Mrs. Hannah Withington, village dressmaker of Hollywood, Massachusetts, found herself one freezing December day slipping around on the icy pavements of Poverty Row in New York City. She had made the pilgrimage hither on an errand of mercy, and therefore, defying wind and ice and snow, struggled bravely on to fulfil her mission.

She had just left the police station near this miserable street, where she had been to inquire for her nephew, Leonard Hurlbert, having come to the great American metropolis in answer to a letter received the day previous from this nephew's wife. The letter told her of their poverty and of three starving children, while the husband and father was dying with consumption. When the missive reached Mrs. Withington she was "stitching against time" upon one of her best customer's toilets, which had to be finished immediately for appearance at a grand recep-

tion, given by a lady of fashion and social renown in Boston, which is six miles from Hollywood.

She hurriedly broke the seal, and after reading it through carefully, except that she forgot the street and number, slipped it in her pocket, and hastened to finish the demanded costume. But as fate had decreed it, the letter went at one side of her pocket into the lining of her dress, and was lost, she knew not when nor where. She had remembered that her nephew's son was ten years old, and named Guy; that the youngest was a girl less than three; that there was one little girl six; and that the marriage of Leonard Hurlbert was effected by an elopement with a wealthy man's daughter from Chicago. These facts, contained in the lost letter, had burned their way into her brain; but the most important part—the street and number of their wretched abode—had escaped her memory.

She hurried on from street to street, ignorant of the fact that she had passed her nephew's door in turning the corner from Poverty Row, where the dead wife now lay upon a straw pallet, guarded by the three famishing children; for Leonard Hurlbert had passed away on the night—Christmas eve—the letter was sent to his aunt. The wife followed in less than a week, and now nothing seemed to remain for the children to do but perish together from cold and hunger in that miserable tenement.

It was commencing to get dark, and one by one the street lights sent forth fitful flashes upon the filthy pavements. It required considerable courage for the kind-hearted widow to persevere in her search, amid such dangerous surroundings, after night-fall. She was jeered at by rough mobs of street hoodlums, as she threaded her way through the crooked rows and alleys. People who have never had occasion to go through the streets in this portion of the city, can scarcely imagine what a forlorn and disgust-

ing aspect they present ; nor can they yet dream of the dark and filthy dens in which its inhabitants drag out an existence.

“ If it is so appalling and disgusting for me to even walk through these places, what must Leonard Hurlbert and his family have suffered to live here, and breathe in such nauseous odors ;” soliloquised the dressmaker, as she turned into Chatham Street, and wended her way toward the Astor House.

The next day, and the next, and the next went by, and her energetic search had still been fruitless ; and she began to think that her journey hither was but a useless expense, and waste of precious time. She arose rather late on the second morning of the New Year, fatigued in body and dejected in spirit.

She descended to the dining room fully determined that this should be the last day wasted in vain search. Tomorrow she would return home, whether or not she had succeeded in finding the objects for whom she had made this cold and tedious journey in mid-winter. She returned to her room after having drank a cup of coffee, without so much as tasting of food, and sat down by her window to reflect. But her brain seemed confused, and she could form no definite plans as to what course to pursue that day. She looked toward the long lines of street cars and shuddered at sight of the trembling horses, their mouths white with frozen foam ; and then turned a pitying glance upon the drivers, muffled to their eyes and thrashing their hands to keep from freezing. A vague and unaccountable impulse seized her to put on her bonnet and cloak, and ride up through the Bowery in one of the street cars. She hurried on her things, locked her door, and walked cautiously over the slippery pavements, reached the car, and stepped upon the rear platform, just as it stopped at the end of the line. The driver took advantage of the two minute's wait to go

inside and warm his chilled fingers, which were as blue and stiff as if the blood had congealed in the large, coarse veins.

Mrs. Withington took the corner seat next to the heater, and watched the driver as he drew a dry ham sandwich from his patched overcoat pocket, and placed it upon the stove to warm. Meanwhile he shovelled in fresh coal, and opened the registers. Then he pulled the burning sandwich from the heater, to which it had stuck fast, and swallowed it in two mouthfuls. It had been many years since the kind-hearted widow had entered a New York horse car, and this driver's forlorn appearance, and the greedy manner in which he swallowed that unpalatable sandwich, touched her sympathetic heart. She beckoned for the man to come to her, and after asking him a few questions, dropped a half-dollar in his rough palm, saying :

"There is a little New Year's offering for you. It must be very cold standing outside in this bitter and searching wind on your long route."

"I thank you, mam, with all my heart ! This is the first time sense I've been on the road that anybody's offered me a penny. I hope you'll have a good many New Years, mam, and that they'll all be happy ones, too !"

As the driver went out to his cold post of duty, a pale, pinched looking boy, wearing patched and faded trousers and a coat large enough for a man, entered the car breathing upon his chilled fingers, and loaded with morning papers. There was no youthful freshness about the white face, and his large hazel eyes stood out with a startled look from his thin, wan cheeks.

"Morning papers, mam," he called in a quivering voice, standing beside the stove a moment and looking toward Mrs. Withington with an anxious, hunted expression.

The car had started on, and passed the City Hall, but yet the dressmaker was the only passenger. The conductor came in to collect her fare, and seeing the newsboy by the stove, called out roughly :

"Here, you young rascal, get out of here. No room for the likes of you in this car."

The boy cast a frightened glance at the burly man, and turned quickly toward the door.

"Stop a moment," called Mrs. Withington. "I want a paper, boy ;" and turning to the rough man who had driven him from the stove, she said : "What harm was this poor lad doing that you should treat him so rudely ?"

The man thus rebuked, muttered something about passengers minding their own business, and passed to his platform with a bang of the car door.

"What paper would you like, mam ? I've got the *Herald*, *Sun* and *Tribune*, mam, and they've all got the account of the big snow storm out in Dakota."

"I will take one of each, my boy ;" and she slipped a twenty-five cent piece into his trembling hand. He drew the change from his pocket, and handed it to the lady with a respectful "Thank you, mam."

"I do not want any change back, child. You may keep it to buy a lunch. Do you sell many papers these cold mornings ?"

"This is the second day I've been selling papers, mam. Yesterday being New Year day I didn't sell but five, which brought me five cents."

"What do you spend your money for, boy, after you have earned it ?"

"Bread, mam. I have lodgings in the house where my father and mother died. I do errands and gather kindlings for the woman in the room below ours, and she lets me sleep on her floor. I buy my own meals. She can't afford to give me food."

"How long is it since your parents died, boy?"

"Father died Christmas night, and mother took cold, and had pneumonia, and died in a few days after."

"What is your name, child?" asked the dressmaker, seeing the boy's lip quiver, and the tears well up in his hazel eyes.

"Guy Hurlbert, mam!" was the sobbing response.

Mrs. Withington stopped the car, and taking hold of the astonished newsboy's hand, led him to the sidewalk, repeatedly murmuring: "Thank Heaven, I have found him! Leonard Hurlbert's boy!"

CHAPTER II.

GUY AND HIS GRAND AUNT.

An hour later Mrs. Withington and Guy Hurlbert sat beside the glowing grate fire, in the latter's room at the hotel, lunching together from a small table, spread with a bountiful supply of such dainties as the boy had never before enjoyed; for since his remembrance the Hurlbert's had been bitterly oppressed with poverty.

"Now, Guy," spoke his aunt, after they had finished their lunch, "I wish you to tell me all you can recollect about your father's and mother's last days, and what has become of your little sisters. It was your father's dying request that I should take Baby Olivia home with me, not expecting then, of course, that your mother would follow him so soon; but I now plainly see it to be my duty to take you all back home with me. You must not be left in this heartless city alone, without kindred or friends."

“I am afraid you found me too late, dear Auntie, for that. When mother died, the clergyman came to the house from a mission chapel to say prayers before she was carried away to the grave ; and when he saw how poor we were, said he would come back and take Olivia to a nice place where she would be taken care of by a kind lady. We children didn’t go to the grave, it was so cold and such a long way off, and then there was no place for us to ride but in the undertaker’s wagon. So the good minister said he would see her buried, and say a prayer for us at her grave, and when he came back he would see what could be done for the rest of us.” Here he bowed his head, and wept aloud, as if a fresh wound had entered his aching heart.

“Don’t cry so hard, poor child ! And did the clergyman come back, as he promised ?” asked his listener, whose eyes were swimming with tears of sympathy.

“Oh, yes, he came back ; but before that, my grandpa came from Chicago, my dear mamma’s father, and took away sister Gracie. He said she was the only one of us who looked like mamma, and he would not take baby nor me, because he said we were just like papa ! I didn’t know we had a rich grandpa till that day, and I was dreadful sorry to lose dear sister Gracie. I told grandpa I had rather work and take care of her, than have her go away so we could never see her again. Because he said she must forget us, and be his little girl after she went to live at his home in Chicago. But he took her away, saying she would starve to death if she stayed there with us in that cold room. So before the clergyman came back from the grave, baby and me were left alone without any fire or supper. But grandpa gave me two dollars and some change, and told me to buy something to eat and some coal for a fire, charging me to let the missionary take Olivia. He said I was big enough to work for my living,

and that the two dollars would keep me from starving till I could find work."

"Did the clergyman return that day for your little sister, Guy?" questioned his preserver, tearfully.

"Yes, auntie, they came that night just after Gracie was taken away; and, oh, you cannot think how dismal it seemed there after dear Gracie was gone, and I didn't have any one to talk to me in the lonely room where papa and mamma died. Olivia cuddled up in my arms and said she was sleepy, and I rocked her in the little chair ma used to get her to sleep in, and when she had gone to sleep I covered her up in the bed, and went out to get a basket of coal and some bread and milk for our suppers. When I got back, the clergyman was there, and the lady with him had taken sister up and dressed her in a warm new frock and stockings, and little kid shoes, and was just putting a cloak around her to take her away. I tried to have her eat some of the bread and milk I brought home, but the lady told me to keep it for myself. Then I went and got the little gold locket that mamma gave me when she died, that I was to keep for baby till you came to take her, and told the lady I must put it on her neck because ma had left it for her. After the minister had said a prayer and gave me fifty cents they went away, and it was so dreadful dismal then I wished I could die and go to pa and ma;" and here the boy broke down again, and leaning his head upon his aunt's sympathizing bosom, bedewed her merino dress with tears.

"What was in the locket which your mamma left for the baby, Guy?"

"Papa's likeness on one side, and mamma's on the other. Ma woke from a long sleep and called me, and asked if you had come, and said she dreamed you came and couldn't find baby anywhere. Then she gave me the locket and told me what to do. If you ever came, she said, I was

to give it to you to keep for Olivia, and if you didn't, I must put it on her neck myself and tell whoever took her that she must always keep it to remember her parents by, and that some day it might be of great good to her. Then I took the locket and put it in the great Bible on the table, and she turned and shut her eyes again and said she was cold and tired. She looked dreadful white, and I was frightened and called to her two or three times, but she did not answer. So I went down-stairs and asked the woman to come up and see what was the matter with mamma. And when she looked at her she cried, and said she was dead. Then I ran for the clergyman of the mission chapel where I went to Sunday-school, and he did all the rest about the funeral, with Aunt O'Reilly's and a lady's help who came from the mission house with him."

"Now, Guy, you may stay here by this comfortable fire while I go out uptown and buy you a nice suit of warm clothes. To-morrow, we will go over to the old house, and see what there is to take away as remembrances of your father and mother, and then we will start for home. You can have plenty to eat and wear now, my boy, without having such a burden of care on your young shoulders."

So saying, Mrs. Withington again put on her cloak and bonnet and took a Broadway car for an uptown clothing-store, in quest of a decent outfit for her newly found grand-nephew.

The next morning, they went together to the old tenement-house where Guy had learned so many bitter lessons of sorrow and poverty, gathered together the few remnants sacred to his boyish heart, and left the same afternoon for Boston.

CHAPTER III.

GUY'S NEW HOME.

The air was keen and frosty, and the trees were shimmering with their icy coating in the morning sunlight, when Guy Hurlbert and his grand aunt alighted from the street car at her suburban home and walked briskly up the hill to the little cottage. A plenty of nourishing food and the warm suit of clothes provided by his benefactress, had worked wonders with the boy. A ruddy glow had begun to creep into his once pale cheeks, and his hands, which for several years had been exposed to the pitiless cold and storms of winter, were now encased in warm, woolen mittens. His spirits seemed to rise with this strange new tide of prosperity and plenty. He wondered in his boyish mind why he had never before noticed the beauty of nature's frost works, and the glistening ice upon the shrubs and trees. Heretofore cold winds, ice and snow meant starvation and distress. Now he looked upon them as God's most beautiful handiworks! How little it requires sometimes to make the most forlorn and destitute of human beings comfortable and happy! And yet, how that little is withheld by those who would never miss it from their bountiful store!

Guy was too full for speech. He kept pace with his aunt's brisk steps, now and again pausing to look at the evergreens hanging low with their burdens of ice, glittering like the crystal prisms from a cathedral chandelier. His fairy land was very different from that into which his sister Grace had been ushered in her grandfather's house. Her's was the more seductive warmth and beauty and luxury of art. His the glow and sparkle and glory of

Nature at midwinter.—the trees and shrubs and evergreens arrayed in their gemmed coronets of ice.

Mrs. Withington opened the unpretentious gate at each side of which fir trees kept guard as with polished bayonets dazzling in the morning sunlight. She was greeted by her bushy-headed maid-of-all-work, Margaret, who had waited anxiously for the arrival of her mistress three mornings in succession, fully expecting to see the little girl she had gone to bring home.

"Sure and it's glad to see yez that I am ! but where's the little gurrel yez went afther ? I hope she's not turned into a bye, sure !" casting an anxious glance toward Guy, who followed his aunt's lead into the snug, warm dining-room, and placed her traveling bag, which he carried, upon the haircloth lounge.

"The baby had already found a good home before I reached there, Margaret ; but I have taken my nephew, instead, to live with us. Now get us some breakfast; for we are cold and hungry after our tedious journey," spoke Mrs. Withington.

"Sure byes bez an awful bother in a house. They does be so noisy !" muttered Margaret, in an undertone, as she proceeded to the kitchen to bring in the steaming coffee and hot muffins, of which she knew her mistress was particularly fond.

"Take off your overcoat, Guy. This room is like an oven !" exclaimed his aunt, opening the door to let some of the heat into the front hall. It did indeed seem like an oven to the boy, who, never since his remembrance, had been accustomed to a room very far above freezing point in the winter season. Neither had he ever before owned an overcoat. They were considered by him as luxuries, in which only sons of the wealthy could indulge. It therefore did not occur to him that he had such a superfluity to remove, before sitting down to the table. The excitement

caused by the strange, new life, into which he had so suddenly come, had made him even oblivious to the fact that he was uncomfortably warm in the overheated dining-room. In his simple, guileless heart, he wondered if God really heard and answered the prayer offered by the clergyman over his mother's grave, that the orphans might be taken care of. He never imagined in his modest mind that his own petition to his Father in heaven on that cold Christmas night beside his earthly father's death bed, pleading for succor and help, could have been heard and answered. It did not seem possible that so humble a cry could reach so high as Heaven.

"Why don't you eat your muffins while they are warm, child? For my part I feel real hungry," and Mrs. Withington took her nephew's cup to add more hot coffee.

"I feel too full to eat, dear auntie. I have had so much to eat and such nice warm clothes since I found you, that I don't feel one bit hungry this morning."

"Well, child, that will never do. You must eat a good, hearty breakfast this cold day, because I shall want you to do some errands for me bye-and-bye. And then we will go to the school-house and see about getting you into the intermediate department. I find you have learned considerable at home. Who taught you, my boy?"

"Pa, after he was too ill to work or go out. I never went to school after I was seven," sighed the boy, who was a natural student, and who longed for a chance to attend school. "But am I to go to school, now, dear auntie? Oh, that will be so grand! I shan't be ashamed to go now with other boys in such nice clothes as these. Am I to wear this suit to school, or keep it for Sunday?" asked the boy, looking proudly upon his neatly fitting trousers and coat.

"You can wear this to school and on Sunday also for a while, Guy. And after the Spring season commences and

"I have more money for dress-making, you shall have another suit for best," replied his aunt, moving away from the table, and directing Margaret to clear the dishes from it, after she had eaten her own breakfast, as she wished to use the table for cutting out work that morning; for Mrs. Withington had only the dining-room for her dress-making work and allowed her one servant to eat her meals there after she had quit the table.

Margaret sat down rather moodily, as she was greatly disturbed at their new acquisition, poured a cup of coffee, and drank it in silence, eating only half a muffin. Then she arose, gathered up the dishes, and carried them upon a tray to the kitchen. Her mistress paid no apparent attention to this sulking fit (for on the whole, Margaret was a good and faithful servant), but seemed absorbed in some plans for her nephew's future.

Guy sat at the window, his eyes riveted upon the glory of the winter morning in its immaculate robes of snow and garniture of crystal ice.

"I should be very happy, dear auntie, if I could only have Gracie and Baby Olivia near by, where I could go and see them, sometimes when you could spare me; but," he added, sadly, "I fear I shall never see them again! Are you the only relation my father had, Aunt Hannah?"

"I am the nearest living relative, my dear. Your father had an older brother who was accidentally killed by being run over on the railroad track up beyond Harlem, somewhere. It happened several years before your father was married, and before your grandfather Hurlbert died. He was a smart young man, so they all said, but unfortunately he sometimes indulged in strong drink, and it was reported that he had been drinking at the time of the accident. He was taken to the nearest hospital, and when inquiries were made by your grandfather, he was informed that his son was dead and had been buried in Potter's Field

for lack of any friends to claim the remains. Three years afterward I was married, and left my home with your grandfather, whom I followed from England several years after he fled from there by eloping with the daughter of an earl, Lady Grace Rumford. The next year both your grandfather and grandmother died, leaving your father alone in the world except myself, his father's sister. He had a talent for art, but of a different character than his father's, who was an English opera singer in London before his flight with Lady Grace. He studied landscape painting with an artist in New York, and after he felt sure he could give lessons understandingly, he went to Chicago, thinking in a new city he could obtain more pupils than in New York. I heard from him once or twice while there, and he seemed encouraged both in his art pupils and the success he had writing for newspapers and magazines. At length his letters ceased, and, although I wrote several times, never heard again until that day your mother wrote that her husband was dying, and begging me to go to them at once. Do you know your mother's name before her marriage, Guy?"

"No, auntie, dear; I never heard either papa or mamma say anything about it."

"But, did not your grandfather tell you his name when he came to take away your sister Grace?"

"No, ma'am! And now I am very sorry I did not ask him; but I felt so unhappy at losing sister, that I forgot everything that I ought to have remembered, I suppose. I feel sure that grandpa wouldn't have told me his name, though. He might be afraid that I should try to find him, and want to see Gracie, or try to take her away with me. Auntie, don't you think that some time before I die I shall meet her? Oh, if I only was sure of that, I could be real happy! And dear little baby, too! Oh, don't you think that *sometime* the good lady who took her away, will

find me, and bring her here to you? If she only knew you had come for her, it seems as if she would give her up to you!" and the boy broke down with smothered sobs and fast flowing tears.

"Let us talk of something else, Guy, now. Try to remember that God is just and merciful to all his creatures, and though the paths of duty are often dark, if we do right and trust ourselves to His guidance, light will beam upon us at last. We will go to the school committee, and see about your entering at once for the Winter term. Your studies will help you in a great degree to forget the sorrow through which you have passed."

His aunt's cheerful words of encouragement seemed to inspire him with hope and courage, and he dried his tears at length, put on his cap and mittens, and they went together to the schoolhouse to make arrangements for his acceptance as a pupil in the intermediate department.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. WITHINGTON.

In order to give my readers a brief sketch of this good woman's earlier history in America, it is necessary that they follow me down among the grand old forests upon the shores of Eastern Maine. For it was there she met her fate—that is, if a woman's husband may be called such.

Mr. Withington was one of the stalwart sons of the old Pine Tree State, and the owner of an immense tract of land on its eastern coasts, now the site of a famous summer resort, known as Sorrento, and once Wankeag Neck.

Where, then, a few scattering farm-houses, which scarcely protected their inhabitants from the biting blasts of Winter, dotted the shores of Frenchman's Bay, now rise imposing villas, with all the improvements of a modern watering-place. Here hundreds of thousand dollars have been lavished upon elegant residences, and the social lights of many a city are attracted hither by the acknowledged charms of this new resort opposite Bar Harbor.

If Mrs. Withington could have seen, forty years ago, what a prize she possessed as a legacy from her late husband, it might have all been different with her. No sound of steam-engine then broke the stillness through those dense woods. The stage from Bangor was the sole dependence of the inhabitants of Sullivan and its adjoining towns, and it is only since the Maine Central railroad has cut its way through the heavily timbered forests, that this great and wonderful place of resort has been fully developed. Although there were a few pilgrims who had found their way to this Mecca of Maine, and who came many weary miles by stage and boat, perchance, to worship at the feet of the grand old Mt. Desert Mountains, its beauties were comparatively unknown.

But to return to Mr. Withington, and what might have been his widow's fortune had she lived her life later in the nineteenth century, we find him prominent among the lumber dealers of those shores. His three hundred acres were rich in the heavy growth of timber, then the virgin forest, into which he had introduced the sacrificial axe for speculative purposes. He floated lumber through the waters of Frenchman's Bay into one of Maine's mightiest rivers, and competed with some of the now dead or retired lumbermen of Bangor.

He was successful for two or three years; but the market at length became surfeited; western productions came to the front and gradually eclipsed the hitherto appre-

ciated woods of the Pine Tree State. Mr. Withington was a sufferer among the rest, and even a greater one, from the fact that he honorably paid his workmen and took whatever remained for himself. When this great crash came upon him, he had been married two years to Guy Hurlbert's grand aunt. The Hurlberts seemed to be a family singled out for romantic marriages, not only in their native land, but in that of their adoption. It proved that Hannah was no exception to the rule. There have been many remarkable first meetings between those whom the gods have smiled upon in the marriage relations ; and yet it is doubtful if there is a case on record more romantic than the first meeting of Hannah Hurlbert and Alonzo Withington, all the more so, perhaps, because it occurred amid these grand old forests between a city maiden, and a native of the rocky wonderland, then comparatively unknown except by traveling artists and a few romantically inclined New Yorkers, who visited it by fatiguing miles of stage travel, and were willing to subsist on clam broth and fish chowder, with an occasional piece of dried apple pie for dessert. And since the history of our hero's benefactress will be of interest to the readers of this tale, they shall have the romantic portion of it.

As is already known, Hannah followed her brother from England some years after he had eloped with the daughter of the Earl of Rumford, and was pursuing his chosen profession upon the lyric stage of New York city. Of an industrious nature, she declined to be supported through the generosity of her brother, whose means were limited, except at times, when a successful engagement had re-imbursed the great tenor singer. Then, money went as easily as it came, in treating his brother artists, who were less successful than he. His lady-wife naturally knew nothing of the little arts of household economy, and

so there were many times when they scarcely had food enough to supply the hungry mouths that must be fed.

It was at one of these times of famine, that Hannah conceived the idea of learning the art of dress and cloak-making. After a year's experience in the same establishment where she had learned the trade, a wealthy lady became the patron of her employers, and always chose young Hannah, who was courteous and agreeable, as well as dexterous and ingenious in inventing ways and means whereby the unshapely figures of the customers could be made to look their best in the garments of her design.

This customer chanced to be one who was among the pioneer visitors to the charmed shores of Frenchman's Bay. A caprice seized this lady to ask the young modiste to accompany her hither one Summer, to keep herself and daughter's wardrobe in fresh repair, as the latter part of the season was spent in Saratoga, and she wished that everything should be in readiness for the gayeties there. Nothing would distract the young girl's mind from her task, in a dull country town such as Sullivan then was, the lady thought; and it would be an act of kindness to the girl to take her away from the sweltering city in summer. So it was all duly arranged between them, that Hannah Hurlbert should accompany them to the shores of Frenchman's Bay.

As the journey and its preliminaries will not be of especial interest to the reader, we will pass them, and give the romantic story of Hannah's adventures and capture of her husband.

Mr. Withington, and some of the men employed to carry on his lumber shipping, lived in a rude cabin, composed of rough boards, and carpeted with branches of spruce and fir. Near this was a pasture where blueberries and raspberries grew in abundance, and through which Withington's men usually passed on their way to the thickly wooded

forest where the lumber was cut. To this blueberry pasture young Hannah had learned the way, and not being aware of the prevalence of wild beasts, which then prowled around those shores, went fearlessly hither, basket in hand, to gather the delicious berries. The fourth visit to the spot, however, proved to be her last one alone.

As she neared the place where an acre or more of burned ground was red with luscious raspberries, she noticed a black looking object moving around among the bushes.

“What can it be?” she soliloquized. “Surely there was never a dog so large as that creature!”

She was soon greeted by a deep, low growl from his royal nibs, and then her heart stood still with terror. The truth flashed upon her dazed brain that she was in imminent danger of being attacked by a hungry bear!

There neither seemed to be safety in remaining where she was, nor yet in retreating. The thought of being devoured alive by this beast, and the dreadful suspense such a calamity would cause her brother in the distant city she had left a month previous, drove her to desperation, and she threw down her basket and walking stick, made a plunge for the nearest spruce tree, and by some incredible dexterity, climbed to its topmost limbs. Providentially the bear did not give chase until she was out of his reach. But she was cornered for the nonce, and knew not how long her foe would watch the premises. She might be forced to remain thus all night, or what would be equally terrible, be kept there until nightfall, and be forced to find her way home through the darkness of a moonless night. As one can easily surmise her reverie was not a pleasant one. She clung to the rough branches, vainly trying to find a limb upon which she could safely sit, but was obliged to abandon all attempts to rest save upon her feet, which stood on one of the stoutest branches. Thus, at the mercy of the beast's caprices, she waited, trembling between hope

and fear, for bruin to return to his burrow. After half an hour of this dreadful suspense, which seemed almost an age to the prisoner, there was a rustling among the underbrush in the opposite direction from her enemy. Believing this disturbance to be another ferocious beast, she shrieked aloud in her terror and helplessness. But her cries had this time reached human ears, and a stalwart young man emerged from the fallen timber and tangled brush, to the tree where Hannah still clung hold of the prickly branches with torn and bleeding fingers.

He bore an axe upon his shoulder ; as he was bound for the Withington forest ; and he bade the frightened girl cling fast to her shelter while he encountered her foe with the axe. With this injunction, he bounded to the spot where the brute was crouched, and leveled the axe at his head. One blow convinced bruin that his pursuer was stronger than he, and with a fierce and hungry howl he retreated to his lair. The young brave's next step was to free the frightened girl from her now uncomfortable perch. He bade her descend to one of the lower branches, and drop herself into his outstretched arms. Without hesitation she obeyed, and was quickly caught in his strong arms. But she was too exhausted from fright and her efforts to keep her balance upon the limb, to be able to walk a step when she reached the ground, and so her preserver carried her in his arms to Mr. Withington's cabin.

The owner sat at an improvised desk figuring over his account books. He arose quickly at the abrupt entrance of the wood-chopper, with his strange burden, hanging limp and helpless from his sinewy arms ; and without asking any questions, prepared a place to put her on one of the rude bunks which served for beds. Some hot drink was at once prepared and given her, which soon restored her strength sufficiently to enable her to relate the blood-curdling tale. Of course the young lumber dealer had nothing else to do

but fall in love with the fair stranger who had thus been miraculously saved from the jaws of the hungry bear. It was unmistakably his duty to do so, and he performed that duty manfully. The wooing was short, and Hannah Hurlbert celebrated the ensuing Christmas in a small frame house on the eastern shores of Sullivan, as Mrs. Hannah Withington.

It was three years later that he was brought home to his young wife weak and helpless from hemorrhage of the lungs, and never again rallied sufficiently to leave his bed. His business affairs were badly tangled, and there was nothing of account left his widow but this tract of land, that no one would buy, and could scarcely be given away at the time of his death.

Finally, about a year later, she was offered one hundred and fifty dollars for it by a distant neighbor, who bought it more out of pity to the dressmaker than anything he expected to realize from it. With this money she went to Hollywood, where we left her at the close of the last chapter, commenced anew her business, and thus managed to keep the wolf from her humble door.

CHAPTER V.

A WARD MISSION.

The ward mission house, to which the reader's attention is called in this chapter, was located in a portion of New York City where liquor saloons, shabby tenements, and offensively disreputable houses abounded.

Women who went out by the day, to work or beg, came to this institution to have their children cared for until

their return from work at night. To this mission house a remarkably bright and pretty little girl was one day brought to be cared for for a few hours. The woman who took her there was well dressed, and had the appearance of a lady. She informed the attendants in the nursery department that she had adopted the child as her own, and that she only wished to leave her there until she could attend to some business uptown. The child was carefully dressed in rich warm garments, and therefore formed a singular contrast to the other unfortunate waifs, who were placed in the infant ward and left to get along as best they could with the care of one attendant. She looked much like a bright rosebud in a garden of ungainly weeds, and it was not long before she had attracted the attention of every child in the room. She being the youngest among them, the others at once undertook her protection and the guiding of her tottering footsteps around the nursery floor.

While they were thus engaged, the sound of music from a hand organ arrested their attention, playing just outside the nursery door, and they ran into the hallway leading the "new baby," as they termed this child. The pranks of the monkey, attached to the organ by a string, so amused them and engrossed their thoughts, that they ventured outside the door, to where the organ-grinder's boy was passing around a dirty old cap for pennies. The Italian gabbled glibly to the boy for a few minutes and pointed toward the children, and then covered up his organ, strapped it across his back, and in a few minutes left his amused audience staring after him as he disappeared around the corner. The boy did not follow the father, but turned toward the nursery door and commenced talking with the children.

Suddenly a frightened scream was heard from the little

stranger, and the children were terrified at seeing her borne fleetly away in the loathsome embrace of the Italian boy.

The alarm was immediately given by the nurse, when she learned the truth, and detectives—so called by courtesy—were detailed to search every street in the vicinity. But their efforts were just as fruitless in this case as they are in most instances where offenders of the law escape detection and punishment. After a few hours of pretended search the officers reported it a hopeless case, and abandoned it altogether. When the lady who left the child there returned to take her away she was greeted with the appalling intelligence with which the reader is already familiar.

Meanwhile, the stolen child was carried by her captor into the miserable street in which the organ-grinder lived, dragged down a rickety flight of stairs into a basement of the most filthy character, and delivered to an old woman who sat upon a bench smoking a clay pipe. The poor little creature seemed paralyzed with fright as this dreadful woman siezed her in her dirty, coarse arms, and began to examine her clothing.

There were no windows in this horrible den, and a smoking oil lamp furnished the unsteady glimmer of light, which only served to make the dark corners more visible. There was no ventilation, and the air was so foul and sickening, that only those bred in filth and squalor could endure it for any length of time.

“Where did ye git this fine dressed brat from?” questioned the half-drunken woman, with a coarse chuckle, that appeared to proceed from the depths of her puffy throat.

The boy rehearsed the story of the child’s capture, and received a penny for his pluck from his proud mother. Heretofore she had begged through the streets with the pitiful tale that she had small children at home, who had nothing to eat or wear, and in her rounds had been given

several faded and soiled frocks, some of which were about the size of those worn by this little unfortunate.

She went to the dilapidated bunk in one corner, which served for their bed, and drew out the greasy bundle of clothing, and began to overhaul them. She selected the most ragged and filthy suit among them, and handed the child to the boy, throwing the clothes down beside him, and refilled her pipe with tobacco, as she found the liquor she had just swallowed as the boy came in, had taken such powerful effect that she could not remove the girl's clothing herself.

"Strip off them fine clothes now, the young one is scared enough to keep still, and look out you don't get no dirt on 'em neither. They'll sell for a good price. Yer dad needn't think he's goin' to have all the whiskey they bring. I'll have my share, he can jest bet," she mumbled, hoarsely, giving the boy a cuff, as if she thought he was in league with his father against herself.

The boy commenced the delicate task of taking off the dainty robes from the terrified child, and in his haste to get through as soon as possible he overlooked the little worsted under-vest, which perhaps saved the child from otherwise certain death by the cold, to which she was exposed the next day in the streets, where she was taken to beg with. In a short time he had transformed the little fairy into an unsightly bundle of filth and rags, then he put her on the dirty floor, rolled up in such a shapeless wad that she could not have handled her feet, even if she had not been paralyzed with fright.

By this time the organ-grinder came down the basement steps, bending beneath the burden strapped across his back. He put down the organ, and looked at his stolen goods with a satisfied grin.

"Good lots money for she clothes, old woman," he mumbled in broken English, pointing his skinny fingers to

the terrified child. "What 'ee done by ze good new clothes her had on?"

"What's the matter with ye, old man? Can't ye see nothin'? There they be, close on to ye!"

The Italian's eyes twinkled like a snake's in ambush, and he jumped up quickly and clutched the little garments, reached for his greasy old cap, and was about to flee up the steps with them, when his attention was arrested by the old woman, who caught him by the arm, and shaking her tremendous fist in his face, yelled fiercely:

"No, you don't! I'm goin' to have my share o' the whiskey them things get. I put the clothes I begged myself on the young'un, and I'll tear 'em off agin ef you don't take this bottle and git it filled for me!" handing him a black bottle which she pulled from her capacious pocket, and giving him a knock on the side of the head with it.

The man seemed considerably subdued by the diplomatic proceeding on the part of this tyrant in petticoats, and he took the bottle with the promise that it should be filled for her individual benefit! The child was put upon the straw bunk, and covered with a soiled and ragged quilt, as the cold and fright and foul air had acted like an opiate on her nerves, and she had fallen asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

A DAY IN THE STREETS.

The next morning the old woman awoke cross and benumbed from the effects of the liquor brought to her the night before. A small dram, however, before she took her morning meal, partially restored her spirits, and made her garrulous and quarrelsome.

"Ye can't have the boy to take in the pennies for ye to-day," she growled to the organ-grinder as he commenced to puff upon his pipe, which didn't seem to be in any better trim than the old woman that morning.

"Why can't me have ze boy? What him got to do?"

"I'm sick, and can't go out with the brat beggin' to-day. He'll have to take her, and go 'round the streets near by. I'm goin' to bed, and have another drink o' whiskey, and see if I can't cure my bustin' headache!" and suiting the action to the word, she tipped the bottle, and took several swallows of the fiery fluid, and then tumbled over on the bunk. The Italian by this time had succeeded in getting his pipe lighted; and telling the boy to take the girl and go out as his mother had bidden him, he strapped the organ across his back, took the monkey from the corner in which he was tied, and started on his daily rounds of grindings. The boy snatched up the little creature crossly; for he had much rather gather in the pennies for his father than go around with the child inventing stories to tell those he accosted in the streets. But he knew what the consequences would be when the old woman come out of her stupor, if he did not obey, and so went reluctantly at his task.

He walked slowly up the dirty and icy street, pull-

ing the child after him, and dragging her sometimes on her knees, when her little feet tripped and she could not stand upon them. He turned into the Bowery, and looked around for some one to attack with the pitiful tale he had been fabricating.

“Please, kind lady, help a poor boy as hain’t got no father nor mother, and has got his little sister ter buy bread for! We hain’t hed no breakfast nor no supper last night, and the baby’s been er cryin’ all the mornin’ fer victuals!” A five cent piece is dropped into his dirty hand by a working girl, who is hurrying on to the shop, where she stitches on shirts all day for the pittance of thirty-five cents.

This good luck encourages him, and he takes the child up in his arms now, lest the next person he accosts will ask him why he lets the little baby sister walk.

“Good sir! will you give me a few pennies to buy sister and me some bread! Ma is home sick in bed, and hain’t had nothin’ to eat for two days. God bless ye sir! can ye spare—”

“Get out o’ the way! ye dirty little beggar! It’s a foine lie yer tellin. I know ye, and yer ould father too. Ye’ve changed yer business from taken pennies fer yer dad, to goin round wid borrered babies. Get out o’ this! round here imposin’ on honest workin’ folks!”

This unlooked for snub somewhat abashed the bold boy; and he gave the poor little thing a pinch on the arm, to make her cry, as he passed on to the next person to renew his petition for charity. From some he received kicks and curses, and from others pennies and old clothes as the case might be; and at noon he went back to the poverty stricken row, from which he started in the morning, with nearly a dollar in money and several garments for his mother and the baby.

He had just turned into the street in which he lived,

when he met a stout Irish woman coming out of her door with a pitcher, after milk at the corner grocery. Now Mary Malony knew this organ-grinder's boy, and of the mother's taking stolen children around to beg in the streets. She was a kind old soul, and she very well knew that this child could be none other than a borrowed or stolen one. She accosted the boy, and asked him whose child he had in his arms.

"That's none o' your business, as I know of," he replied; "but I'll tell ye all the same, that she's a nice one I found yesterday, all dressed up. I won't tell ye where though, and I ketched her and ran home with her as dad told me to!"

The kind-hearted woman looked at the pinched face of the little girl, and thought of the dear baby she had buried the year before. She wondered if it would be possible to get the child away from this boy, and thus save her from the terrible life which awaited her with those beggars and vagrants.

"Can the little wan walk alone? I notice yez carry her in yer arms?" inquired Mrs. Malony.

"Walk? You jest bet she ken!" and he put her upon the sidewalk to demonstrate the fact.

She caught the child in her fat arms, hurried back to her tenement, and slammed the door in the boy's face, who had followed her to recover the shrieking child.

Once inside of Mary Malony's homely apartments, she was as tenderly cared for as the straightened circumstances of the kind-hearted woman would admit. She gave her a plunge bath in the foaming soap suds, in which she had boiled her customers clothes, and put on a comfortable woolen frock that had been worn by her own baby the year before. Then she heated some milk, crumbled bread into the tin dipper, and fed the half-famished child with a well scoured plated spoon. She rocked her in the

creaky old chair which had done service since her first year of housekeeping. The tears gathered in her tired eyes and rolled down her lobster-colored cheeks.

"The poor, dear little cratur, she's sobbin' in her slape, intirely. The saints be praised that oi come acrost the young divil as sthole her!" she muttered to herself, audibly, rocking to and fro with renewed energy.

Here her one sided conversation was interrupted by the entrance of her leige lord, who had come from his day's work with his coal shovel through the handle of his basket, and balanced upon his broad, fat shoulders.

"Faith, and oi've had a harrud day of it, woife. Divil a bit o' worruk could I foind since tin o'clock this mornin'. By all the saints, phat iver have yez there?" turning suddenly around and seeing the child on a warm woolen blanket by the blazing hot stove, where his wife had placed her, while she got the supper upon the table.

"Shure, Moike, I don't know mesilf, phat I've got, but the poor spalpane was stholen intirely by the owld organ-grinder's bye, what lives down in the basement at the fut o' this row. I was afther goin' out fer milk for me tay at noon toime, and I met the bye wid the little girrul in his dirty arrums, takin' her home from beggin'."

"Ah! the young divil! the polace ought fer to know the capers them organ-grinders bees up to, shure."

"It wuden't make any difference if they did, Moike. They're a bad lot thimsilves, and I thought I'd be shure the poor little cratur was taken care ave mesilf."

"But phat'll yez do wid the spalpane, sure? It's harrud worruk enough yez have now, and she's nothing but a barbey, to be watched and tinded, nather."

"Shure, don't I know that, Moike? But the poor little cratur must be taken care ave, and wan o' these days she'll be owled enough to run arrants."

“Begorry, it’ll be manny a day forninst that toime comes. But niver moind. Phat’s that ye’ve got for supper? By all the saints, a foin mate poie! Ah, shure yez can kape the spalpane for all oi care!”

Mrs. Malony tucked the sleeping girl in a little trundle bed she had always managed to stow away somewhere in the narrow space they occupied (since it called to mind the lost baby she had so many nights watched over beside that low couch), and carefully covering her up, poured the tea, and she and Mike sat down to their hardly earned, and well-relished evening meal.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER EIGHT YEARS.

Tempus fugit! Eight years have wrought a great change in Guy Hurlbert. In all these years he has never received any tidings from his sisters, and this is the severest trial he has had to bear. As we look in upon him to-day in his aunt’s sewing room he is hard at work over a difficult problem in algebra.

“Guy, my boy,” spoke Mrs. Withington to this manly-looking youth beside her; “are you fully aware that you are eighteen years old and have grown so stout and strong that I cannot realize that you are the same boy who sold newspapers in the New York street cars eight years ago?”

“I suppose Auntie, the change is more obvious to you than to myself, although I shall never forget how forlorn and destitute I was when I met you in that street car eight years ago; nor shall I ever lose sight of the fact that you

have toiled for my support and education ever since, my dear aunt. I have been thinking of late that I should try to hunt up a position in some wholesale commission house or banking concern in New York after I graduate from the high school next June. I think it is time I did something for you in return for all your kindness to me."

"Perhaps, Guy, I might do better with my dress-making there, I should like to make the experiment at any rate."

"But it is impossible to tell whether you could get work enough to live upon or not, and then there would be the additional expense of selling out here and commencing anew there."

"Well, there are more people to be clothed there, and more money to spend for dressmaking than here, in this obscure town. And then, if you have determined to look for business there yourself, I shall certainly go to make a home for you. And my business is growing less and less every year, now that so many of the ladies here go into Boston to get their dresses fitted, and make them at home on their sewing machines."

"Yes, Auntie; but have you counted the extra expense of living in a city like New York? I wish young men could step into positions whereby they could make money enough to support those they loved who were working themselves into their graves to keep soul and body together. If I could make money as fast as I should like, I would search the country over to find Grace and Olivia, and bring them home, and I would take care of you altogether."

"You forget, Guy, that you might meet some young lady in the near future, who would put all those generous plans for your sisters and old aunt to flight forever."

"Do you think that I would allow any girl to come

between me and my duty to you and the children, Auntie?"

"No, Guy, not intentionally, surely. But your sister Gracie is not a child, she is a young miss of fourteen, and the baby Olivia nearly eleven. How time flies!"

"Yes, but I sometimes wish it would fly more speedily than it does. I think if Grace were only a woman, instead of a young girl, she would defy the wicked restrictions of my grandfather, and try to find her brother and sister and come to them, even though he disinherited her as he did our mother. I shall never forget those bitter words from him in the old tenement that winter morning eight years ago. They burned their way to the heart's core. Ah, me! it is a hard world for some people; and those who are the most heartless and ungrateful seem to be the ones who are most prosperous. The wealth and pleasures of this world flow into their baskets from every avenue, and yet they continue to oppress the poor, and take away even the meagre happiness they might possess."

"Yes, Guy; but it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong!" replied his aunt, with honest simplicity.

"That is true; but it makes me very dissatisfied with your lot and mine, Auntie, and the more I think of it the more rebellious against fate I become, although, I am well aware that such repining will not mend matters one whit."

"Perhaps it is just as well to think about something else—things we can understand better, and that will be of more use to us in getting through the hard places in life, Guy. It may be that some day you will be in as good circumstances as your rich and proud old grandfather. We can never tell who fortune may favor!"

"If I am not rich till I make it myself, it will take till I am as 'gray as a rat,' as the saying goes. People don't get wealthy on five or six dollars a week salary. That is as much as most of the young men in stores and commission

houses can command. But I should be glad of even that to commence with, if I could work my way up in a few years."

"You remember more about the great city and business houses there than I supposed you could, leaving it so young," replied his aunt.

"Yes! I shall never forget my father's words, when mother told him I should soon be old enough to earn something in a store or wholesale house. She thought it would reconcile him to giving up work, when he was too ill and weak to bear the fatigue. They were talking over the prospects I had of getting a place, but father said despairingly, that even if I could obtain a place, the pay would scarcely be enough to buy the extra clothes I would need to keep looking respectable, beside other boys, in business houses. I never forgot those hopeless words from my sick and dying father, and it always distressed me to think I was a burden upon those who struggled so hard to keep us children from being the poorest and most degraded of street beggars!"

"No! no! Guy! not degraded! that could never be, with your sensitive natures and the Hurlbert blood in your veins."

"And yet, it seems my grandfather thought the Hurlbert blood far inferior to his own. He seemed to brand poverty as a crime, and judged the quality of blood by the quantity of worldly goods one possessed. If I could ever hope to buy my grandfather's good will far enough to be able to be on friendly terms with dear Gracie, I should be glad to be rich. I don't dread poverty of a wholesome kind so much for myself, as for what it brings upon those who are near and dear to me. It was poverty that killed my mother and separated me from my dear sisters, and brake our hearts almost, and made us old in early youth."

And Guy arose and paced the floor with rapid strides in the intensity of his emotions.

“Do you think there is any use for you to attempt to find a situation in some banking-house or office in Boston, Guy? If you could, it would be much better by saving the cost of board. You could take a lunch with you, and I would have dinner at night on your return; I should like it that way just as well.”

“Oh, no, Auntie, that can never be; I have been looking in Boston for the last three months for some such position, and there are about five hundred young men to one situation. It is only a waste of time, unless one has influence outside of their own ability. The high school boys all say the same thing. If they have rich and influential friends and relatives it is comparatively easy to obtain positions; but a poor wretch like me stands no chance around here.”

“You are a strange boy, Guy! One would think you twenty-five, instead of nineteen, to hear you discuss the realities of life!”

“I have had bitter lessons, Auntie, and I cannot forego them. To be sure it has been different since I lived with you; but I can see how hard a battle you have to fight to provide for yourself and me. It is all sacrifice on your part for me. I have not been any help to you, as I have attended school all the while, and studied when at home till bed time! And yet you would have done still more, and sent me to college, if I would have allowed you to make such a sacrifice, and accepted of your hardly earned money to appropriate thus!”

“Why, Guy, you would make an excellent lawyer. You can plead a case so touchingly that judge and jury would be convinced that your client ought to win the case! You think it is no use to try to get a position in Boston; but will New York be any better, think you?”

“Well, Auntie, there are more positions ; and then there are not so many educated and good principled young men there looking for places. Boys who go there from Boston and other eastern cities can obtain places much easier than New York boys themselves. So with my education and abilities to endure hard work and live on small pay, I think I might stand some chance of success !”

“Well, young wiseacre, perhaps you are right. But if you go I intend to go with you. I can do as much better with my dressmaking as you can about getting a position !”

And so it was settled in their minds, at all events, that New York was to be their future home, and hereafter we shall see how they succeed in the great metropolis to fight the wolf from their doors.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. MALONY SEEKS A NEW HOUSE.

Mike Malony came home one night with the startling intelligence that the row in which they had lived for twelve years was to be torn down, and they must get out in less than a week.

“The Lord be praised for that !” ejaculated his wife, as she poured the tea into the immense cups, and handed Mike the mutton stew.

“Whatever do yez say the Lord be praised for, when it’s the Divil’s own doin’s, turnin’ us poor worrukin’ folks out o’ doors right in the heart o’ winter.”

“Faith, oi say so because I mane it, Moike. Oim as plazed as oi can be, to get out o’ the awld shanty, sure.”

“Whereiver is the gurrel, woife ? It’s two cowl’d fer

the young cratur to be out this late ; and thin she moight be led astray into some bad place, intirely," grumbled the head of the house, who felt very much out of sorts and in a faultfinding mood.

"Sure oi had to sind her up in the Bowery with the new gintleman's washin'. Oi hadn't the toime to go mesilf."

In the midst of this discussion the young girl came in with the empty clothes basket upon her round arm, rosy from her walk and the frosty atmosphere, wearing a small red pumpkin hood over her auburn curls, and a bright worsted shawl around her graceful shoulders. Mrs. Malony, with the advice and consent of Mike, had christened their young charge Pansey Bloom. She was such a bright little creature (her round face and velvet-like eyes set in a framework of golden brown hair) that even this prosaic old wash-woman thought she ought to bear some name belonging to the floral sisterhood. She had passed the age when Toddie and birdie and sugar plum could with propriety be applied to her. "Pansey" seemed to just fill the bill in her protector's estimation. The good woman was still waiting for the child's mother to claim her, and for some reason, or scruple, peculiar to one who thinks she has no right to claim another's property or children, she did not call her by their own Hibernian name, nor did she attempt to instill the Catholic faith into her young mind.

Pansy went to her small couch in the corner of the room and removed her outside wrappings, smoothing out her glossy hair, as she laid aside her hood in a pasteboard box, and came to the supper table with a smiling face, where she sat down between Mike and his wife.

"Faith, child, and oim glad yez have come home. Oi thought mebbe yez had had the bad luck not to foind the gintleman in."

"I did have to wait for him, Auntie. But he said he was sorry he kept me so long," and he gave me this money

for myself, besides paying for the washing," and she held up a silver half dollar, to the astonishment of Mike and his wife.

"Phat the divil did he give the child all that money for. I belave his intintions were bad intirely. He might lade the young girrul asthray, bad luck to him!" and Mike brought his fat fist heavily down upon the uncovered board table.

"Sure, thin, yez needn't scare the child to death, Moike! She didn't know there was airry thing wrong wid takin' the money from the gintleman!" and the much irritated Mrs. Malony turned to the young girl, who trembled like a culprit at Mike's apparent wrath.

"There, there! poor little Pansey, Mike didn't mane it, sure! No doubt the gintleman was plazed wid yez, and the clothes as well"—for she did not underrate her own work—"and it was no sich a bad thing for him to reward yez for fetchin' the washin' this cowl'd night."

"Here, Auntie, please take the half-dollar. I do not need it, and it will buy soap and starch for the next week."

"Sure it wud burrun me ould fingers, if oi took it from yez, whin the gentleman gave it to yez to kape for yez own spindin' money. Yez can put it in the little box wid the rest o' yer trinkets, and kape it till some toime when yez'll made it more than yez do now, which toime the Lord forbid will iver come though," she added, crossing herself in a most devout manner.

"Thank you, Auntie! you are very kind to me. Perhaps that some day I can do something to help you."

"Sure yez are a great hilp to me now! But I've got some news to tell yez, child. We've got to be afther movin' out o' here this very wake. This tinniment is goin' to be pulled down! Sure, thin, phat a scampering there'll be wid rats and mice, as well as the tenants."

"Oh, I am so glad, Auntie. Can't we go up somewhere

above Grand Street, in a nicer part of the city, to live? I think I can get something to do to help pay the rent. Oh, if we could have two rooms it would be ever so nice!" And the child's eyes sparkled with her modest anticipations of future elegance; wondering if they could ever arrive to a floor covered with matting or ingrain carpeting, such as some of the girls mothers had, who went to her school, and lived above Grand Street.

"Well, child, maybe we can. Ate yer supper, now, and we'll see about that in the morning. Oi'll be afther goin' out to look fer a place, soon as iver I git the breakfast out o' the way, sure;" and the kind old creature poured Pansey a cup of strong tea, which she declared "wud take the cockies out o' the child's hairt!" an expression which it is to be hoped she understood herself, although it is rather doubtful if she did.

The young girl drank her tea and ate her mutton stew, very absent-mindedly, for her thoughts were wandering beyond the dingy walls of that humble room, and visions of future grandeur, treading over carpeted floors in a new home, flitted through her imaginative young brain. She possessed a hopeful temperament, and even while she sat at that unpainted board, and ate mutton stew with these coarse people for her companions, in spirit she was roaming in far-off lands Elysian.

Just at this time she was revolving in her mind the feasibility of investing the money given her that might in decorations for the new house. A smile lighted up her bright face, and she took the half-dollar from her pocket, and turned it over reflectively, as if trying to estimate its value.

"How far will this go toward buying a carpet for our new home, Auntie? I would ever so much rather you would take it for that than to lay it by for myself."

"Faith, and oi've a good bit o' money laid by ave me

own, child, and maybe we'll have the carpet. I don't want any of your money. Some day you may nade it yersilf; perhaps when oim dead ye'll want it for a night's lodgin'; but may the howly saints prevint such bad luck intirely."

The next morning, after Mrs. Malony had put up Pansey's and Mike's lunches, one for the school-house, and the other for his day's work, she started on her search for another tenement. She traveled miles in her weary rounds, and came at length to a high brick house in Broome Street, several blocks west of the Bowery, where a slip of paper upon the side of the entrance door proclaimed that there were "Rooms to let on the top floor. Inquire within." She dragged her tired feet up four flights of stairs, and rapped loudly on the first door she came to. It was opened by a haggared looking woman, with a sick infant in her arms.

"I've called to see about rintin' these rooms, mam. Is it yersilf that can tell me how much they charge a moonth?"

"Oh, yes. We have the whole floor, and the rent is more than we can pay. We don't need but two ourselves, and so the landlord gave us permission to rent to some respectable family. Have you children, mam?"

"Sure, no. Only a young gurrel oi took that belonged to a family of gintle blood, mam—leastwise I suppose they must have been of gintle blood. She's a foine young gurrel, indade, mam, and is nigh liven years owld, too! Thin there's Moik—that's me owled man—and mesilf. That's all, mam. How much do ye charge for the rint ave the two rooms?"

"Ten dollars a month for a small family without children. Do you take in washing, or go out to work by the day?"

"I takes in all oi can get, sure, and sometimes I goes

out to worruk. Can oi have a place to hung clothes on the roof?"

"Yes, if you take your chances when the other tenants are not using it. There are six families that use the roof for their clothes, and five more below who have the back yard."

Mrs. Maloney began to think her chances were slim among so many who had the prior right. But then, she knew that it would be next to impossible to have everything to her mind, and in another place, some more troublesome obstacle might present itself. At all events, it looked more like a decent place for habitation than the one she had occupied so many years. And then she thought how pleased her little Pansey would be with such a respectable looking tenement, and it was up above Grand Street as the young girl had wished. Kind old soul! she always thought of pleasing others in her plans.

After looking into every niche and corner and dark closet of the two rooms, she decided to take them, with all their drawbacks. So she gave the weary looking woman three dollars to bind the bargain, and trotted back home in time to get supper for the ravenous Mike.

The next morning, Pansey, who was so delighted at the prospect of moving out of that despised tenement that she was almost beside herself with excitement, obtained permission to stay away from school, and help her benefactress to pick up their few earthly possessions, and get ready to move. She flew from one thing to another, as if her life depended upon haste, and on the whole, Mrs. Maloney concluded she was more bother than help; since in her hurry and flutter she threw cups, saucers and plates into the same box with iron ware, without so much as wrapping a cloth around them, and then looked up for more dishes to pack. She seemed so happy in her employment, that the kind old soul let her go on, and then followed her

around and took them all out again, and wrapped them carefully up to prevent their total destruction when they got into the hands of the truckman who moved them.

At length the last article was snugly packed, and when Mike came home to his supper, he was informed by the tired woman that he must "eat his supper from the top of a barrel, and sit on the wash-binch ; fer all the rist o' the things was packed up !"

"The Lord be praised that I get any supper at all this night. Glory be to goodness we don't have to move ivery month. Phat did yez pack all the chairs in thim owld quilts and sheets fer to-night ? Yez don't expect to move before mornin' sure !"

"Why, bliss yer soul, Moike ! the man is comin' before siven o'clock in the mornin', and oi want to be all reddy, sure ! Now ate yer supper and be aisey wid yez !"

Mike obeyed, as meek as a lamb ; for the stew was hot, if he did have to eat it from a tin dipper with a rusty spoon, and sit upon the wash-bench instead of a chair.

Mrs. Maloney awoke from her disturbed slumbers in the morning, more tired than when she laid down the night before. They all slept on some quilts thrown upon the floor, for she would not hear to Mike, when he asked if they could not take a mattress or straw bed from the ponderous pile of household goods that stood up in the corner at the door ready to be loaded on to the wagon as soon as it was daylight.

"Faith, and it was a bad drame I had last night, Moike !" she said, rubbing her watery eyes, and sitting upon the quilt wadding, her hair in a pug behind. "Me slape has kind o' gone asthray on me. Not a wink did oi get till long afther midnight, and thin oi had a terrible drame, intirely !"

"Faith, and no wonder yez did have bad drames, tryin'

to slape on the fleur wid nothin' but a quilt undernath yer owld bones !”

“Sure, Moike, I dramed that yez was brought home to the new tinniment all sthave to paces, and kilt intirely !”

“Sure, oi wud be kilt intirely, if oi had to slape on sich a harrud fleur as this another night !”

“Pansey, child, are yez most drissed ? If yez are, put on the petaties and tay kittle ; oi don't fale jist right ; but oi'll get over it whin oi drink a cup o' tay, mebbe.”

Pansey was dressed in a few moments, and busy obeying the tired woman's orders. She was very anxious to get out of that dreadful den of confusion, which was made more unendurable than before by having every article of comfort packed up, and leaving nothing but the bare and desolate floor and dingy walls. The child felt her life growing harder each day to bear. Although she met with nothing but kindness from either Mike or his wife, it was hard for her to mingle with such rude, though well-meaning people, and never hear the sound of aught but coarse voices, nor look upon anything but loathsome tenements, tired women, and sickly and dirty children, such as lived in the neighborhoods where the Maloney's were obliged to live.

“I am going to try and find something to do to earn my own living !” she soliloquised, as she poked the fire and put on fresh coal. “I wonder if I couldn't get into one of the stores on Grand Street or the Bowery for a cash girl ; I can read and write well enough now to leave school. And then I have studied grammar and arithmetic, too. Poor Auntie cannot afford to buy my food and clothes much longer, and she'll have to pay more rent in the new house !”

“The wather is biling in the tay kittle, Pansey ; jist put the tay a drawin' and oi'll fry the mush meself. Oi'm a dale bether thin oi wus whin I first waked up !”

This sudden command, or request, brought Pansey's reverie to an abrupt termination, and she made haste to put the tea in the pot and pour the boiling water upon it. The three then hurriedly swallowed their breakfast of fried mush and boiled potatoes, and just as they were through, the truckman drove up to the door and began to load on the goods, throwing things hurriedly and promiscuously into the cart, regardless of Mrs. Maloney's screams of terror, lest everything would be-broken in pieces. When the last article was on the load, Mrs. Maloney and Pansey mounted upon the top of the truck, and turned their backs forever upon that desolate row.

CHAPTER IX.

A HOME OF LUXURY.

In a light and airy music-room in a sumptuous up-town residence, a young and handsome girl sits at the piano beside her music teacher. This is the mansion of Major Henry Dunn, the senior member of a large banking house down in the vicinity of Wall Street.

This young girl is counting with monotonous tone : "One, two, three, four ; one, two, three, four !" while she runs her shapely white fingers over the yielding keys. It is Saturday morning, and as school studies are over for the week, she has to practice an hour longer this forenoon than on other days of the week.

A young lad, two years her senior, thrusts his brown head and pink cheeks as round as apples, into the room from the open door leading into the side hallway, and calls out in clear tones :

"Come, Helen ! arn't you nearly through with that everlasting 'one, two, three, four ?' All the boys and girls are going sleigh-riding in the park at eleven o'clock, and mamma says we can go, too, when you are through with your lesson and practicing, if papa will let us !"

"I should think there were considerable many obstacles in the way of our going, if all you say has to be done first. It is not always so easy to coax papa to let us go where we wish to. But who do you mean by all the boys and girls, pray, Mr. Rattlebrains ?"

"Come, Queenie, don't be sarcastic ! Why, the high school boys and girls, to be sure ! Who else could I mean, do you suppose ?"

"Are they *all* the boys and girls in New York in your estimation ! I should presume there were a great many others, Jasper. But never mind. I'll be through in an hour ; and then we will see what can be done by way of coaxing papa to let us go ;" and the young beauty turned around to her piano again and resumed her task of counting time, and manipulating the polished keys. Her cheeks flushed a bright pink hue, and a coquettish smile lurked around her dimpled cheeks ; for the young girl felt very much flattered at Jasper's apparent impatience for her company.

As for the lad, he turned reluctantly away from the music-room, and thought an hour seemed an eternity to wait for the consummation of his hopes. Helen was his only dependence as intercessor with his step-father, and he was very anxious that he and the young girl might be permitted to go on this sleigh-ride with the other pupils in the high school, which they attended together.

Jasper loved this adopted sister next to his own mother, and he sometimes caught himself connecting her with all his plans—boyish plans though they were—for the future.

For a time he lingered around the hallway leading

from the music-room. But time dragged heavily with him, and he whistled and drummed upon the stair railings, and finally, failing to amuse himself, he went upstairs to his mother's room, and rapped hastily upon her door. He burst into the room at her call to come in, and threw himself upon a chair in a vexed and irritated manner, exclaiming :

"Oh, mamma, I think it is a shame that Helen should have to stay in that old music-room and drum on the piano a whole hour longer. I wish she would go and ask papa if we can go out sleigh-riding with the high school scholars."

"Well, my son, I see no other way than for you to submit to it as cheerfully as possible. You must recollect that sister Helen has the hardest of it, my dear."

"Yes, I know she does, and that is why I am more anxious that she should leave the tedious thing till some other day, when there is nothing in particular going on. But Helen is awfully hateful to-day, and she snubbed me shamefully, and turned back to the piano as if I was of no more consequence than a poodle dog. I'll have my say some day ! See if I don't."

"Hush, my son. It is not right to talk like that about your sister in her absence."

"She isn't my sister !" answered Jasper, hotly ; for he was an impulsive, thoughtless youth, and sometimes forgot himself, even in the presence of his lady-mother, whose kind heart always prompted her to defend the absent, and rebuke what she thought injustice of speech or action.

Jasper flushed crimson at this reproof, and stammered a somewhat reluctant apology for his thoughtless words of anger.

"I fear papa will go down town to business before Helen gets through practicing. He always leaves here at ten, you know."

"Very true. I did not think of that. You may go to Helen and say that I think she had better not practice after she has finished her lesson to-day. She can make up some other time. I should like very much to have you both go on the sleigh-ride, as it is seldom there is snow enough for such fine sleighing as there is to-day."

Jasper needed no urging to do as his mother suggested. He bounded out of the room, boy fashion, and hastened down to the music-room again. Pushing aside the half-open door, he looked toward the piano, only to find it closed and vacated. Helen was not in the room. He turned and went back up the stairs, two steps at a time, and re-entered his mother's room.

"She is not there, mother, and the piano is closed."

"Perhaps she has already gone to Mr. Dunn, Jasper," suggested his mother.

"It may be she has. I wonder if I dare go to the library door and listen?" said the youth, half to himself. "Had I better, mother?"

"It may be just as well to wait, as Helen will surely come to you as soon as she has his permission to go, my son," she replied, with a shade of sadness in her face, grieved that Jasper stood in such dread of his step-father.

Poor little woman! She had begun to feel her marriage relations with Major Dunn a yoke of bondage, and her son a victim to his unreasonable caprices.

His granddaughter was more favored. It pleased him to see her bristle up, and assert her power, even though it was exercised over himself, which it frequently was of late.

This morning the caprice seized her to steal away and join her school companions without Jasper's company. She took a sort of enjoyment in trying her power over him and in giving him to understand that she could be happy as well without as with his company.

It is singular what a vast amount of snubbing young

men of Jasper's age will endure, and still cling to those who administer the blows at their pride and conceit, with untiring persistency. Ten, or even five years later, in Jasper's life, he would have resented such treatment, and ignored the queenly tyrant altogether.

Soon after Jasper turned away from the music-room, Helen dismissed her teacher and went to Major Dunn's private library, where he sat surrounded by piles of papers, to ask permission to go out sleigh-riding with the party of young people before alluded to. The old gentleman happened to be in better humor than usual that morning, since he had read glowing accounts in his newspaper of stocks booming in which he was a heavy speculator. He was, therefore, in the right mood to grant almost any request that did not especially disturb him in any way. He answered her brisk rap upon his door in an amicable voice for him, at least, bidding her enter. She opened the door softly and stood smiling and blushing before the usually stern man. She made known her request with nervous haste, and in her most humble manner. It did not require so much coaxing on her part as she had expected to gain his consent, and she left his presence flushed and excited with his permission to go, provided she wrapped up warmly and Jasper went to be her escort and protector.

Meanwhile, Jasper waited in his mother's room, with what patience he could command, for the young queen who held him so completely in the toils.

At length Major Dunn came out of the front door muffled to his eyes in his beaver-trimmed overcoat, stepped into his waiting carriage, and was driven down to his banking-house. Jasper watched him until the carriage was out of sight, and then turned to his mother with a grieved expression on his usually bright face.

"Where can Helen be all this while? Papa has gone and she must have asked his permission before this time."

"Perhaps you had better find Nannie, and send her to your sister's room. It is possible Mr. Dunn has refused to let you go, and so she dislikes to tell you the unpleasant news."

"Poor Helen!" replied Jasper. "I know it would almost break her heart to be refused now that all the others expect us and will most likely wait beyond the starting time for our arrival."

He hastened to summon the chambermaid, and sent her to Helen's room as his mother had suggested.

But the girl soon returned, saying that "Miss Helen was not in her room, nor anywhere to be seen."

"Is it possible that she could have gone alone, and without letting either of us know?" spoke Mrs. Dunn, starting for the young lady's room to assure herself that Nannie had not made some mistake. Jasper followed his mother. They first went to the clothes-press where she kept her sealskin sacque and cap, only to find that they were gone. It looked very much as if their owner must be inside of them somewhere.

Poor Mrs. Dunn had learned now that she need not expect her husband to bid her good-bye—with or without a kiss. But it was something new for Helen to leave the house before coming to her room and kissing her good-bye. It made the kind little woman's heart heavy to be forced to believe that her foster child, whom she had loved next only to Jasper, should grow careless and ungrateful. She had noticed of late that Helen came to her less with her girlish troubles and joys.

But this last act of self-will and neglect of duty, if, indeed, she had gone where they feared she had, distressed her kind heart more than she would acknowledge to her son even.

“Do you really think she has gone, mother? Or can it be she is somewhere hidden to make us hunt for her. Is there a possible place in the house where Nanny has not looked?”

“I cannot tell my son; but I will send the butler at once to search the entire premises.”

Search was accordingly made over the house, and the whole family took part in it; but no trace could be found of the missing girl. Then Jasper started for the school-house. He ran all the way, in breathless haste, his thoughts intent on the one object, which he knew perfectly well would prick his fingers, like a chestnut burr, when reached. But he was like most other weak and romantic youths: he pursued blindly that which would make him the most unhappy when attained.

When he arrived at the school-house he was informed by the janitor that the party, which included Helen Dunn, had been gone fifteen or twenty minutes. He turned his steps homeward with dampened zeal and less speed. He dreaded to tell even his sympathetic mother that he had been so shabbily treated by one who held such a subtle power over him.

He entered the house and walked slowly up the stairs to his mother's room, where she was anxiously awaiting his return. She really hoped he had learned that Helen was there with the other pupils, although it meant wilful neglect and unkind treatment to her son, and ingratitude to herself on the girl's part. Anything was better than not knowing where she was and what had happened to her.

“Well, my son! did you hear any tidings from your sister at the school-house?”

“Oh, mother, she has gone with the other scholars. I did not think she was capable of treating me so shabbily!” and his voice choked with suppressed anger and resentment.

"Are you sure she has gone on the sleigh ride, Jasper?"

"Yes, mother, the janitor told me she had gone with the others."

"Well, my son, do not let that foolish caprice of hers spoil your happiness for the day. I should like to have you be my escort to the opera matinee this afternoon. I am sure Helen will be sorry enough that she is not here to go with us, and that will be punishment enough for her unkind action this morning."

Jasper tried to cheer himself with the thought that Helen would keenly repent her rashness, and that he should have the pleasure of seeing her ask his forgiveness like a penitent, as well as the felicity of feeling that, after all, he was the only boy companion she had to look to for gallantry and protection.

Mother and son took lunch together in the breakfast-room, which was smaller and more cosy than the great frescoed dining-hall. The sweet little woman had succeeded in cheering her son to such a degree that his merry laugh rang out heartily, when George, the table waiter, came in, bringing mushrooms on the tray, and said he knew they were not toadstools, because he tried them on the coachman first, and they didn't kill him.

After they were through with their lunch, Jasper assisted his mother to get on her sealskin dolman, and then went to bid the coachman bring the carriage to the door.

It was thirty minutes after one when Mrs. Dunn and Jasper left the house to start for the opera. Just as they had entered the carriage, and Jasper was closing the door, Helen came up the gravel walk, her face as brilliant as a damask rose, and smiling as if nothing remarkable had occurred. She stepped briskly up to the carriage to inquire where they were going, and on being told, sweetly asked if she could accompany them. Mrs. Dunn looked toward Jasper,

and seeing the pleading expression on his face, told the young lady she might go, and so she was not condemned to an afternoon of solitude as she deserved, after all.

CHAPTER X.

A STORM IN A PALACE.

When Major Dunn returned from business on the day of the sleigh-ride, he was in very bad temper. He had learned through his coachman that Helen went with the party without Jasper, and he was angry at her daring disobedience, as he termed it. He went hastily to his wife's room and demanded an explanation.

"Why did you not send Jasper with Helen on that sleigh-ride to-day, Mrs. Dunn. I told her positively that he was to go along to take care of her. It was not suitable for a young girl like her to go unattended in that manner!"

"I did not know that she was going until she had gone, Mr. Dunn. She did not come to tell me, and Jasper waited a long time for her, expecting every minute that she would come and let him know if they could go by your permission," replied his wife.

"Then she is the culprit. I'll make her understand that hereafter my orders are to be obeyed! I believe I shall be driven distracted between that boy and girl! It seems I have to do all the managing in this house! Where is the young queen?"

"In her room, I suppose, sir!" answered the sorely perplexed woman.

In a storm of rage he went to the bell pull, and struck

it three times for the maid. She soon appeared, and stood timidly before the furious major, twisting the corner of her apron, in nervous confusion.

“What is it, sir?”

“Go to Miss Helen’s room, and tell her I wish to see her in the library, at once!”

Then he left the room, slamming the door after him, like some spoiled boy whose mother had told particularly to shut it very softly, or he would be called back to do it properly.

He entered the library, crossed over the soft Turkish rug, and threw open the window, calling the porter a “blasted idiot” for turning on heat enough for a Turkish bath, and muttering, half aloud, in an injured tone, that he “was afflicted with more fools about the premises than anybody else in New York.” It is a wonder he did not remember that all those “fools” were of his own selection, and he alone was responsible for keeping them around him.

He settled his fat proportions down in an easy chair, at length, and awaited the result of his order for Helen to come to the library.

A timid rap came on the door.

“Come in!” called the major, loudly.

“Please, Sir, Miss Helen is changing her dress for dinner, and says she’ll be down as soon as she is dressed.” The maid courtesied after delivering this message and withdrew. The major moved around in his chair uneasily, and finally arose and slammed down the open window, muttering to himself audibly, that he must either roast or freeze in this badly managed house.

At length lady Helen appeared at the door, which the capricious major had opened when he closed the window. She looked unusually handsome in her garnet cashmere house dress, tied at the throat and waist with pink satin

ribbons. But there was a slight curl to her proud lips, and a defiant manner which presaged opposition to a lecture from her grandfather.

"Well, young queen, you disobeyed my orders, this morning, it seems! What have you to say for yourself?"

She stood twisting her satin sash ribbon, and made no reply.

"Why don't you speak? Are you dumb, or can't you think of any excuse to make for your behavior?"

"I was not trying to think of an excuse, sir; I did not know you forbade my going without Jasper. You said I could go if he went to take care of me; but you did not say I could not go unless he did!"

"That is a small hole to crawl out of, I must say! Remember, girl, that for this piece of disobedient folly, you will not be permitted to go out in company again this winter! Do you understand me, miss?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, coolly, turning to go out, and deliberately smoothing her twisted sash. The door closed, and she was gone.

"What an old fool I am with that girl. She is like her mother, bound to have her own way, and I am a weak old idiot to let her have it!"

The major had made a slight mistake, though, as to whom she was like. Never was child more like parent than Helen Dunn was like her grandfather. Only she did not make so much bluster about having her own way as he did. She went about it more coolly and deliberately.

"What did I let her go from me in that cool and audacious way for? She shall come back and explain her behavior!" he muttered, hotly, to himself. He started for the door, and found that she had not yet left the hallway.

"Come back here to me; I want you!"

She slowly retraced her steps, and again stood before him.

“Why did you leave my presence with such an air of unconcern? I’ll teach you better manners than that, if I have to send you to a convent to learn them! Don’t you ever dare to leave my presence again with such impudent ways!”

“Well, papa, I don’t always like to have Jasper with me! He is often very cross and exacting. He wants to have his own way in everything, and never is willing to give up to me. I did not intend to disobey you;” but I did want to punish Jasper a little!”

This speech somewhat appeased her grandfather’s wrath, and he began to question her as to her grievances about her foster-brother’s treatment.

“I’ll go to his mother and see if he cannot be made to know his place better. He has no business to show his fiery temper to you. He dare not to me! I’ll teach him a lesson too!” and the unreasonable and changeable old man brought his fist down on the writing desk with a hasty bang.

Helen began to regret that she had said anything unkind of Jasper; for she feared that he might by too much ill nature from her, turn his companionship in some other direction, and she be left altogether out of his protection. She liked to try her power over him; but it would be a terrible punishment if he should cease to worship at her shrine. So she coaxed her grandfather not to say anything about the matter to Jasper’s mother. In reality, there was no one in the whole world she valued so highly as Jasper, and her foster-mother came next. She did not care a pin for the old man, before whom she was called to account that evening. But she knew that he must be managed cleverly, or he would not grant her wishes. Sometimes honeyed words would accomplish this, and at other times it was better to show a spirit of self-will and independence. His moods were as unaccountable as they

were fitful, and it required an artist in the study of human nature to manage him. Helen's tact in this matter was a natural gift, and not an acquired art, and therefore developed in extreme youth. But it often put her to her "wit's ends" to understand whether fond words or imperious demands would avail with him most. He was never twice alike, and so his fitful changes of humor had to be carefully studied.

"I would rather not have you say anything to mamma or Jasper about what I have told you. I suppose he means it all right enough, and it would not be pleasant to have words with him. It does not matter much. Perhaps he will do better now that I have taught him a lesson by going away to-day without him, papa."

"Well, girl; see that you do not teach him a lesson again by disobeying my orders. I believe I shall be killed or driven to the lunatic asylum between you. I have more important business on my mind than looking after your foolish quarrels. Now go to your room, and mind that you are not late to dinner!" and he dismissed Helen with an imperious wave of his fat hand.

She had escaped with less punishment than she really deserved this time, and it gave her courage to do other daring things which ought to have been checked in her early years. Perhaps if she had received less indulgence in her foolish whims, she would have been a more noble, and far less selfish woman than she proved to be in after life.

As Major Dunn had important business matters to transact just at this time, he chose to let the unpleasant matter between himself and his granddaughter pass, and plunged into his pondrous pile of papers and documents, entirely oblivious of everything around him.

The first call to dinner was totally unheeded by the absorbed man, notwithstanding he had cautioned Helen not to be late. This was usually the way he set examples

for the young people. Those who are always lagging behind their appointments are not very successful teachers of punctuality.

At the second call from the ebony waiter the major hurried into the dining-room and took his seat at the table, at which his wife, Helen and Jasper had been waiting fifteen minutes.

"I am a trifle late on account of some important papers I had to look over," apologized the head of the house. "Can't you make this carving knife a little sharper, George? I may as well attempt to cut with the back as the edge of this," addressing the butler, who had always stood in mortal terror of this unreasonable man. George took the knife from his master with a trembling hand, and disappeared through the kitchen door. Meanwhile there was an oppressive silence at the table. None of the family could seem to think of anything pleasant to say, and so preferred to let the major open the conversation, if he chose to do so. They had all received a taste of the unreasonable tyrant's hasty temper that evening, and dreaded a fresh outburst, if they should happen to hit upon a subject that did not suit his present unhappy and disagreeable mood. He seemed deeply absorbed in thought, and preserved a rigid silence until the butler returned with the carving knife. He took it from his hand impatiently, asked each member of the family what they would be served to with cold formality, and made no attempt at conversation. Although everything was served according to the most rigid table etiquette, this family had far less enjoyment of their evening meal, than Mrs. Malony and little Pansey, who, on account of moving the next morning, were obliged to eat their humble supper from the top of a barrel and sit upon the wash-bench in place of chairs.

At last the tedious meal was ended, and the family dismissed in silence. The major followed his wife up to

her room, and when they reached it, he told her he had a little matter of business, about which it was necessary to speak with her. By her free consent, when they were first married, he took the management of her share of her first husband's money, as well as the guardianship of that which should fall to Jasper at twenty-one, who was only seven years of age when the present Mrs. Dunn became the major's third wife. She opened her eyes in wonder at this speech from him, as she was seldom, if ever, consulted upon matters of business by her self-conceited husband. She took a seat opposite his, and waited nervously for him to speak. He cleared his throat in an embarrassed manner, and began :

“ We have decided (alluding to his partner) that double the business we now do could be done easily with the investment of one-third more capital, disposing of our house by selling it outright, and taking another on lower Broadway. There is now a rare chance to sell this to advantage to one of Fairweather's brothers, who wants a banking-house of about as much capital stock, and we have one in view, partially bargained for, such as suits us. I don't suppose it makes any difference to you where I put your part of the capital, madam ?”

“ It seems I have nothing to do or say regarding it, if I had objections, and so it would be only a waste of breath and needless advice,” replied his wife, with more spirit than she had ever exhibited before to her lord and master.

He coughed a little uneasily, and nettled around in his chair as if sitting on pins.

“ Well,” at length he spoke ; “ women do not have the burden of business on them, and so they cannot expect to have their say about such matters. But, of course, if you have any serious objections, I shall look into them, and do the best I can to have you suited.”

Truth to tell, Mrs. Dunn had commenced to repent the

folly that prompted her to give all her property into her husband's keeping, instead of waiting to learn what manner of man he would prove to be. As it was, she was entirely in his power, so far as money matters were concerned, as well as subject to his whims in other respects. She had no more voice in the management of Jasper than she did in that of a stranger. He was step-father, guardian and ruler in one, of this young lad, and he ruled like a despot in all these capacities.

For a few minutes after the major's last speech, both sat in silence. Then he broke the spell by saying :

“Jasper will be seventeen next June, and I think he had better go into the bank and be learning something about business. A good knowledge of banking is better than a college diploma. And, as his guardian, I ought to see that he does not get foolish notions about a profession into his head. What do you say to putting him to business next Spring in the new banking-house, if we conclude to make the change ?”

“I suppose he must do as you think best, since you are his guardian. But if my wishes were consulted in the matter, I should say that I preferred he should go to college, whatever vocation in life he chose after he got through. His father left him sufficient means to complete his education, and start him well in almost any business besides. I know it would have been my husband's desire that he should have a college education. But that matter can be discussed in future. Do you intend to invest all our property in this new banking scheme ?”

“Oh, I can not exactly tell at present. I think I shall sell this house, however, and rent one less expensive to support. I can do better with this capital than making a spread with it in mansions. I am getting more sensible in my old age. I had rather have money in the bank treasury, than in fine mansions. When men get to be

millionaires, they can have things their own way, and everybody takes off their hats to them. There is a great satisfaction in that, Mrs. Dunn !” and the major arose, and coolly bidding his wife “good evening,” retired to his office in the library, to look over ponderous piles of documents, done up with mysterious seals, and tied with pink tape.

CHAPTER XI.

FAREWELL DAYS IN THE OLD COTTAGE.

The lilacs had commenced to reveal their purple linings, and the cherry and plum trees emitted a delicate fragrance from their bursting buds. A pair of robin-redbreasts were fluttering around among the orchard tress, prospecting for a place to build their nest. Bees began to be busy gathering honey from the modest little daffodils and revelled amid the brilliant tulip beds. Mrs. Withington sat by the open window, breathing in the sweetness, and at the same time making button-holes in the waist of a dress for one of her customers. Guy sat near her intently absorbed in his lessons for the next day, occasionally inflating his lungs and exclaiming :

“How sweet and refreshing the air is to-night, Auntie ! I shall hate to leave this dear old home, and all these beautiful flowers and shrubs, for the unpleasant and unhealthy odors of New York City. I am afraid you will feel the change even more than I do ; for you have always been accustomed to plenty of sweet, fresh air, and a garden full of the most fragrant flowers !”

“It is a great pity one couldn’t live altogether on the

fragrance of flowers and pure, fresh air, Guy. But unfortunately we poor mortals require something more substantial to keep soul and body together. It is no worse for me to breathe the unpleasant odors from Hunter's Point and Staten Island oil factories, than for you. We have a few weeks more to stay here, and let us inhale all the sweetness we can while we may. There will be time enough to breathe foul air, when we get where it is ;" and Mrs. Withington passed her needle back and forth with increasing rapidity, as the time was drawing near for her customer to send for the dress.

"The high school boys say I shall be back again in less than three months, Auntie. Some of their friends have been out there looking for positions, and they say there is nothing to be found worth having. Many of the wholesale houses are only paying three dollars a week for young men even older than I am, and more experienced in business, too! I don't see how they can manage to board and clothe themselves on that money ; do you ?"

"I suppose they are young men who either have homes in the city, or parents elsewhere, who pay their board while they are learning business. They certainly could not live on that sum, unless they had some such help, Guy. Now you can see the necessity of my going with you till you can get started in business ; what do you think you should prefer to do, Guy, tend in a store of some kind, or keep books in an office ?"

"I should prefer a position in a bank to anything else, Auntie. But it may be a year, or more, after I get there, before I could obtain such a desirable place. I may be obliged to go in a store for a while ; but I shall make a desperate effort to find something better as soon as possible. I hate to see you working yourself to death for such meagre pay !"

"Dressmaking pays better than plain sewing, Guy.

There are hundreds of poor women in large cities who work fourteen hours a day, and only earn one-quarter as much as I can at cutting and fitting. We must be thankful that we are not so badly off as those poor, half paid toilers."

Mrs. Withington always looked upon the bright side, if there was a bright side of life to turn to, and her grand-nephew had a great deal of her disposition. He met and faced adversity bravely when in the great city during his childhood, and now that he was verging toward manhood, he did not flinch from taking up the duty of toil and hardship, in the hope that before many years he should be able to support his kind benefactress. For this end he was willing to work early and late, and deny himself of every luxury. He was not a modern "cigarette-smoking young man," nor did he ever acquire the habit of using the offensive and expensive weed. He had "better uses for his earnings," he said, and so religiously put them to a better use.

It was the last week in May, and they only had a month more to remain in the pretty, neat cottage, embowered in shrubs, trees and flower-beds. They had spent many happy hours in this snug little nest. It was beginning to grow dearer to them both, now that they were so soon to leave it. The sun was fast sinking amid a gorgeous pile of fleecy clouds, and lighting the whole heavens with its departing glory. The tired woman had put the last stitch in the button-holes she was hurrying to finish, and she dropped the basque a moment and gazed intently from the westerly window at the artistic touches nature had given to the sunset clouds.

Guy, too, seemed entranced with the beauty spread out before him. Though they were poor, and apparently forsaken, they had the same right to these heaven-born beauties that the queen and prince had. The wealthy cannot shut out God's wondrous beauties from the poor, although they can oppress them in their wages and over work them.

Guy felt a proud ownership in all this magnificence, just as a son feels that he has an heirship to his father's houses and lands. Robins, blue birds and thrushes came and sat upon the branches of the gently swaying cherry trees, and sang their good-night songs to the enraptured youth, whose life lay before him with such dim and often dread uncertainty. The frogs began a merry concert in the lily pond across the garden. Arrows of flame shot up through the purple masses of cloud, in which the glorious orb of day seemed to be taking his evening bath. Gradually the deep gold paled and the crimson faded into blush rose tint, succeeded by a silvery blue, and then the evening star peeped out from behind a curtain of soft vapor, which melted gradually into the opal blue of the sky. All these different dissolving views were presented and had passed away, and still Guy sat motionless. His aunt had slipped away and wrapped up the dress she had finished in a stout piece of brown paper, and then went out into the kitchen to assist Margaret—who was getting old and rheumatic—to sprinkle and fold the clothes which she had just taken in from the sweet, fresh grass in the back-yard.

A pleasant drowsiness fell upon the tired youth's brain, for he had poured over his algebra till he could think no longer. He was a hard and persevering student, and ever ambitious to reach the highest mark in his classes. Unlike most youths of his age he preferred a well-stored head to the luxury of self-indulgence. But it was getting dark on the piazza, where he had gone to catch the last ray of light upon the open page before him, and so he indulged in a pleasant reverie, inspired by the odor of flowers, the gentle twittering of birds, and the dying glories of the western sky. The god of sleep stole over his senses, and he was suddenly transported into dreamland.

The theory that our dreams are but the continuation of our waking thoughts, is not always a reliable one.

Although Guy's weary brain may have been the cause of his mysterious dream, it was strange that it should come to him after falling asleep amid such an enchanting scene as his open eyes last rested upon.

He was swiftly borne through dingy and squalid streets in his native city ; and then was tugging up the frozen and rickety steps with the market basket on his tired arm as he used to do when a boy in the old tenement. Then he saw that death-bed scene on the cold Christmas night, and heard the feeble voice of his father raised in a last, dying benediction.

Suddenly, he was changed to a full grown man, and was walking down Wall Street, looking for a position in the large banking-houses. He stopped before one of these stone structures, and looked in at the windows. He saw millions of shining gold coins, and a stout old gentleman counting them over and over. A voice sounded in his ears, loud and rather rough, he thought, saying :

"What do you want, young man, some of this gold?"

He tried to answer that he did, but would like to get a chance to earn some of it. But he could make no sound.

"This was hardly-earned gold, young man, and you can't have it ! You must work and get your own money !" said the voice.

Then he turned away from the window, and saw a bright-eyed maiden looking over his shoulder at the same gold.

"You can't have it !" echoed the same voice once more ; and then the old man vanished from his sight, and the great plate glass suddenly shattered in pieces, and fell to the sidewalk, while the shining gold coins were showered at his feet, and rolled over to the young girl beside him. Then he held the shabby old market basket again on his arm, and both he and the young girl began to gather up the gold coins and put them into it. In a few minutes it was filled, and yet it seemed as light as if

full of feathers, and he took the young girl in his arms and started to run with her and the gold. But a voice called after him ; a youthful, ringing voice. He turned and saw a handsome young man standing erect, and pleading that he would give the beautiful maiden to him. He could not withstand his earnest request, and so set down the basket, and took out some of the gold, threw it in her apron, and gave her to the young man, who waited with open arms to receive her. Then he turned to pick up the basket, and a lovely female hand took hold of it with him, and they walked along together until they reached a splendid mansion. She beckoned him to follow her in, and he as eagerly obeyed her behests. Then she told him it was all hers, and he would not need the gold in the basket ; for he should share it with her. And he awoke holding this beautiful creature in his arms, and showering kisses upon her lovely lips.

It had been only fifteen minutes since he fell asleep, and his brain had traveled over all this space, and he was back again on the cottage veranda, with the algebra open upon his knee, while his aunt's voice sounded in his ear, somewhat jarringly, it is true, after the winning tones of his charmer : " Guy ! my boy ! you must have been asleep. Come, you had better go inside ; the dew has commenced to fall ; I fear you will take cold."

CHAPTER XII.

PANSEY'S NEW HOME.

Although Mrs. Malony had in a degree bettered their condition by moving, she found that there was still room for improvement. She had two rooms instead of one cramped up and inconvenient one, it is true; and the neighborhood was not so filthy and disgusting as the one from which she had moved; but all their coal and wood, and their own weary limbs, had to be dragged up four long flights of stairs; and this was no small task to perform three or four times a day as the occasion required. Then there were many very questionable, and some openly disreputable houses around them. This did not matter so much for themselves, Mrs. Malony thought, but it was not the thing for a young girl like Pansey to be amid such disgraceful surroundings.

The woman of whom they hired the rooms was respectable enough, so far as they knew, but it was evident that she had a history of some kind, since she gave every evidence of education and good birth. But something was amiss, beyond a doubt. Her husband, if he was such, was a course, brutal man, often coming home the worse for liquor, and making the whole floor vibrate with his brawling tongue.

The woman took his insolence and abuse with comparative calmness, and was always dumb when he upbraided her. This, Mrs. Malony thought, argued strongly against her and their relations to one another. "No wife that had a dhrap of sinse wud stand awl his scoldin' widout defendin' thimsilves, shure!" she said one day to Mike, when a terrible storm of wrath burst upon the helpless woman

from their half-muddled landlord. Mike often attempted to interfere in these domestic brawls, which were always one-sided ; but he was prevented by his wife.

Mrs. Malony did not have so much washing to do in her new house, either. The old customers had lost track of her, and she could not seem to find new ones to take their places. Then it was almost impossible for her to get the use of the roof to dry her clothes. It was nearly always in use by the other and older tenants. Pansey's clothes were getting shabby, and she could see no way of replenishing them. Mike worked most of the time, it is true, but he only earned seventy-five cents per day, and that would not go a great way beyond paying the rent, buying fuel and food, be it ever so coarse and poor.

The child came home from school one day with a sleeve of her best and only dress torn nearly off. She had been playing tag with one of the other scholars at recess, and the wild and rude girl had caught her by the arm, and the frail fabric, which had first done service in a gown for Mrs. Malony, gave way. Poor Pansey was terribly alarmed. She knew very well that this dress was her all, and that her "auntie" had no money with which to buy a new one. She thought of her half-dollar, so carefully treasured, and wondered if that would buy the calico for another, thinking that perhaps she could make it herself if Mrs. Malony could get it cut by "exchanging work" with some dressmaker in the neighborhood. She was an ingenious child at planning. Older heads than hers would not have thought of this piece of strategy in nine cases out of ten. She had seen some calico in the Bowery, outside of one of the cheap stores, marked at five cents per yard. She reckoned up how much seven yards would cost at that rate per yard, and found she would have fifteen cents left for thread and buttons, and so decided that she would invest her treasured half-dollar. She entered the room

holding on to her tattered sleeve, and looking very much as if she had lost her last friend.

"What's the matter wid yer gown, child? The saints protict us if yer sleeve ain't torn nearly off yez intirely! What spalpane did that, sure?"

"One of the scholars at recess, Auntie. I could not help it. Oh it was dreadful, and all I have got, too;" and the distressed girl broke down with sobs and groans, and sank upon her knees before the amazed Mrs. Malony.

"Hush, child! I know you wern't to blame. There, there, niver moind! Don't cry so! yez shall have another, so ye shall, ye poor darlint! The ould frock aint worth all thim tears at all. Oiv'e got a fine new gintleman to wash fer on the Bowery, forninst Grand Strate, and I'll soon airn enough to buy another for yez. Now cheer up and be aisy wid yez about the ould frock," and the kind soul lifted her in her arms, and rocked her to and fro, as she had done many a time when she was a helpless toddler.

Pansey was very much relieved by her "auntie's" assurance that the "old frock was not worth cryin' about, at all." But she was fully determined not to accept one penny from the hard working woman, who was ready to make any and every sacrifice for her sake. But she kept her thought to herself on this subject. She mopped the tears from her round eyes on her small cotton handkerchief, and began to cheer up a little with the prospect of having a new dress, and being able to buy it with her own money. Poor Pansey! she was "eating her brown bread first," as children say, who crowd down their impalatable food so they can have pie or pudding afterward. It is often the case that those who are pinched in childhood, ride in their carriages and wear velvet and diamonds in middle life; while those who are pampered and fêted in early years, fill pauper's graves, and toil when the weight of seventy winters has borne them down, with stooping shoulders, and whitened

their locks. The wheels of fortune are ever turning. "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but exceeding small."

Pansey slipped from her comforter's fat arms, and went over to the corner where her little treasures were kept. She had several pennies that Mike had given her for holidays, now and again, and a little trinket which Mrs. Malony gave her one day, saying it might be of use to her some time in finding her parents or friends. She was very proud of her precious store of trinkets: as proud as children of the rich are with their costly toys and dolls. After looking at these treasured trifles for a time, she took up the half-dollar, and turned it over reflectively, as she did on the night it was given her. She hated to part with it; for she felt that it was the paving-stone towards a dollar, and perhaps many more. But she must have a dress; that was certain, or she could not go out doors at all. How was she to go up in the Bowery after the calico with that torn sleeve? She studied awhile, and then concluded it was best to get her "auntie" to put a few stitches in it, while it was on her, and then she could wear Mrs. Malony's shawl to cover up the defects. But she must work very cautiously, or the kind old soul would mistrust what she was doing. She knew it would be all up if she did, and then the money must either come from Mike's scanty wages, or the new gentleman's washing money. This Pansey could not endure. She went to the little dingy basket in which the thread and needles for the family mending were kept, and took a large needle from the cushion, threaded it with linen shoe-button thread, and took it to Mrs. Malony, with her glasses, saying:

"Here, Auntie, will you please sew up this dreadful tear, so I can keep the dress on till bed-time?"

The amused woman took the needle and commenced operations. First she pricked her own fingers, and then stabbed the girl in the shoulder. Then she balanced her-

self against the wall, and succeeded in putting the needle in the torn calico. She took about ten long and grinning stitches, and cut the thread, declaring the dress looked as good as new.

Pansey laughed hysterically, and ran to put the needle and thread back in the work-basket.

“Oim goin’ out afther some petaties for supper, now child, and yez can put on the pot and have the wather bilin’ whin oi gets back agin, sure! Moike ’ll soon be home.”

A happy thought struck Pansey. If she could go for the potatoes it would be a good excuse to get out, and then she would go up in the Bowery and buy the calico and bottons for her new dress.

“Oh, Auntie, let me go, please, and you make the water boil by the time I get back. I can put on your plaid shawl, and that will cover up my mended dress sleeve. May I go, Auntie, dear?”

“Au yes, git away wid ye, if yez want to; oim glad to git rid o’ goin’ meself, entirely! Now don’t run yer little legs off. There’s no particular hurry!”

Pansey’s eyes sparkled with pleasure as the thought of the new bright calico dress beamed before her, and the possibility of a cotton lace ruffle at the throat.

She put on her old straw hat, tied the strings under her dimpled chin, threw Mrs. Malony’s shawl over her shoulders in a saucy, jaunty fashion, and started on her mission, with her half-dollar carefully wrapped in a piece of paper and tucked in her pocket.

“Faith, and there’s a gurrel to be proud ave! Sure the prince wud do himself cridit to take her for his wife, whin she gets big enough. Faith and there’s noble as well as gintle blood afther runnin’ through her veins as sure as me name is Mary Malony,” and as she ended up

this speech to herself, she hurried to put on the potato pot and tea kettle.

Pansey walked with rapid steps toward the store in the Bowery where she had seen the five cent calico. But what was her disappointment when she noticed that it had been taken down from the door, and was in all probability sold to some one else.

She entered the store, which was as dark and dismal as a tomb, stepped timidly up to the counter, and asked, in a clear, girlish voice, for the coveted calico.

"Mine booty leedle gal, ven did you see dot galico?"

"The day before yesterday, sir."

"Vell, it vash all sold pefore yesterday night. It vash a great pargain, and I makes me noddings on it. I vill show you anodder biece of galico so goot as never vash pought pefore, already. It is der pest biece of galico in der Powery, for seven cents a yard, a beautiful plue golors, to became your complection mit."

"I cannot pay over six cents a yard for my dress. I have only got fifty cents to buy it with, and get the bottons, too!" said the girl, shyly, for the Jew storekeeper had come very close to her, and his keen eyes seemed almost to pierce her through.

"Vifty cents! Vell, as you are so booty a young miss, I vill let you puy seven yards for heluf a tollar. Vat you says to dot, hey?"

"I have to get the buttons with this money, too, and if I pay it all for the calico, I should not have anything to buy them with!" replied Pansey.

"Vell, I gif you der puttons mit it! Vill dot pe satisfying, miss?"

Pansey said it would; and the crafty Jew took a dozen of white porcelain buttons, worth about two cents, and slipped them in the package of calico, which was precisely the same quality as that which hung out at the door the

day before. She took the package, and swiftly walked over the dirty pavements back to Broome Street, and hurried on to the grocery store for the potatoes.

"Have I been gone a great while, Auntie? I hope you haven't had to wait for the potatoes?"

Faith, no! the fire didn't burrun worth a cint, and oi've had to porke and worruk over it half o' the toime since yez left the house. Bad luck to it! There must be somethin' the matter wid the chimney, sure! Oi sometoimes wish we was back again in the ould tinnament. Phat iver hev yez there in the boondle, child?"

Pansey went to the cleanly scoured pine table and laid her package down, cutting the string and cautiously unrolling the precious goods.

"I have bought me a dress with my silver half-dollar, Auntie. I hope you won't be displeased with me?" and she held up the blue calico, very much like a culprit who had been convicted of thieving, for the astonished woman to pass her judgment upon.

"Don't you think it is pretty, and cheap, too, Auntie? I got seven yards and a dozen buttons for the fifty cents."

"Faith, and it's mighty purty fer your compliction; but I wanted yez to kape yer half-dollar till some toime yez might nade it."

"Yes, I know; but I must have a new dress now that this one is so badly torn, and you have no money to buy me one with. If you can do some washing for the dress-maker across the street, perhaps she will cut it for me, and then I can sew it myself, I think!" and she straightened up in a dignified manner, as if proud of her abilities in the line of plain sewing.

But now Mike had reached the top stair of the four long flights, with an appalling groan; so his wife and Pansey were obliged to postpone further planning about dressmaking, and hurried the potatoes (which were still obstinately

hard, on account of the bad behavior of the fire) and warmed-over mutton stew upon the uncovered pine table, to which all three sat down with keen appetites and thankful hearts.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW BANKING-HOUSE.

It was a terrible thing ! so Major Dunn thought, at least ; but Jasper began to develope an alarming genius for painting. He daubed everything he could get his hands on, both at the house and bank, from the door panels of his sleeping room, to the desk in the office, at which he pegged away from nine in the morning till five in the afternoon, over rows and rows of figures, in which he had just about as much interest as in Chinese hieroglyphics.

The new banking-house has now been in existence about two years, and the irrepressible major has had his own way in regard to putting Jasper at the desk in his bank, instead of sending him to college, as his mother desired. As for the young man himself, he did not care for either college or bank. All his aims and ambitions were centered upon the one grand inspiration of landscape painting. He improved every leisure hour at his favorite occupation. He had so far enlisted the sympathies of his mother in this all absorbing hobby, that she gave him what money she could scrape together from her monthly allowance for dressing purposes, to purchase materials to practice his studies, which were well chosen, and gave unmistakable signs of a budding and fast developing genius.

One day the major suddenly entered the office in which his step-son was engaged, to look for a misplaced document,

and caught him putting the finishing touches on one of his favorite studies in business hours. Jasper was by no means an eye-servant, nor had he ever before touched artistic work during office hours ; but he was entirely absorbed in this sketch, and the temptation to improve a few minutes of the strong light, which threw a bright halo upon the desk just at that time, got the better of his good sense, and it seemed as if fate had decreed that his step-father should be cognizant of this first and only deviation from the path of business duties. Jasper was above concealing what he was doing from his guardian. He might easily have slipped it under the lid of his desk and taken up his pen instead, if he had had the disposition to deceive the old man. He colored slightly, however, when his stepfather approached him, and in angry tones demanded to know "what right he had to be fooling away his precious time with that infernal daubing?"

"Just at this hour the light was so strong at my desk, I thought it was no particular harm to put a few finishing touches upon one of my studies, that I am to send to an artist as a sample of my work. It is the first time that I have ever taken up my brush to use during business hours, sir ;" plead Jasper in self-vindication.

"Let it be the last, as well as the first, then. There are fools enough already dabbling with such trash. Painters and sentimental composers of verse finally die of starvation, or live to be supported by their friends, if they have any. I wonder what next I shall have to contend with in shape of idiotic nonsense? You will never have this whim gratified while you are under age and my guardianship, whatever folly of the sort you may be guilty of afterward. So you may as well settle your mind to that decision, at once, and now !" and the angry man took his document and went out, closing the door with a bang.

Jasper put away the treasured trial picture, took up his

pen with a heavy sigh, and commenced to pore over the long column of figures, which stared at him like so many black demons from the open page.

He began to indulge in bitter thoughts and regrets: "Why did my mother choose such a guardian to rule over me? Why did she ever marry him? If my own dear father could have lived, I might have been abroad, now, in a studio. Let me see! it will be two years before I shall be my own master. It appears an age, when I think how long time seems in this disgusting banking-house. But I suppose I may as well make the best of it. And yet, there is Helen and mother at home who would be sorry to have me away from them. I should feel lonely without them, too, away in foreign lands. Well, I must wait till I am my own master. It is hard, though!"

This reverie was abruptly brought to an end by the entrance of a tall, and rather broad-shouldered young man, of perhaps twenty-one, who stepped to an opening in the railing, hat in hand, and asked if he could see one of the members of the firm.

"What is the nature of your business, sir?" inquired Jasper, who was generally the one to answer inquiries of the kind.

"I wish to see about obtaining a situation of some kind here. Perhaps, however, this is not the right office to apply, but I thought you might be able to direct me to the proper person for such inquiries," modestly answered the young man. Jasper wondered that anybody should seek a chance in so disagreeable a business.

"Mr. Dunn generally engages the clerks himself, but perhaps Mr. Fairweather can tell you whether there is a vacancy at present. His office is in the next room. Perhaps he will see you if you apply at the second window in the front office, and perhaps not; but it will be no harm to try," replied Jasper, politely.

The young man turned away rather wearily (for this was his tenth application for a clerkship in a banking-house that day, and he began to feel somewhat disheartened,) and went to the next window, according to directions, and asked if he could see Mr. Fairweather.

Now this member of the firm was as congenial and considerate toward every one with whom he came in contact, as Major Dunn was crusty and arbitrary. All the employees respected him, as well as those who had business transactions with him. The applicant for a position removed his hat, and stepped into Mr. Fairweather's presence with fear and trembling. He felt that he could scarcely endure another rebuff or refusal and keep his courage to further continue searching.

Mr. Fairweather motioned to the stranger to be seated, saying he would be at liberty soon.

After turning over bills and papers, which were piled before him in what seemed hopeless confusion, he opened an envelope, and drew forth its contents, which he read, and threw in the waste basket. He then turned and asked the young man what he could do for him.

"I am searching for a situation, sir, and was directed to you by one of the clerks in the other office."

Mr. Fairweather seemed studying the applicant's face and weighing his words, of which he seemed sparing.

"If you had applied last week there might have been a fair chance among others for a place, young man. I regret to say it is now filled," replied the banker, feeling an uncommon interest in the young man before him, who looked as if he had some weight of care upon his mind.

"Have you had any experience in this business, or is it merely your first trial for a situation?"

"It is not my first trial for a situation, sir, but I have not been able to obtain one. I have been in a Western college for the past two years, or year and a-half, I should

have said. I have not the means to continue my studies any longer, and am anxious to do something for self-support, and also to assist another whom I am in duty bound to repay for past care and kindness. But I will not take more of your time, sir, as you must be busy ; and time is money," he added, rising to leave.

"I think Mr. Dunn must be back by this time, and there may be a chance that the young man engaged last week does not give satisfaction. If you will wait here until my return, I will go and see what the prospects are."

The young man said he would wait. Truth to tell, the junior partner did not like the youth whom the wilful Major Dunn had employed as collector of bills, and outside business of that kind generally. He was a good reader of faces ; in fact, study of the human face was an especial hobby of his ; and he always said he never was deceived, and never had occasion to change his opinion from first impressions. But let us follow him now to Major Dunn's private office. The major had returned, and was sitting at his desk with a ruffled countenance, his thoughts still upon Jasper's unguarded trespass on what he considered his time.

"There is a young man in my office, Mr. Dunn, who is very anxious for a situation here. He looks to be truthful and willing to do any honorable work. Is there any prospect that he could be engaged ?"

"Prospect of a chance ? No ! I could have my choice from one hundred strong and smart young men for one vacancy if we had it. You need not have taken the trouble to come to me yourself. If you had sent the youth here, I could have dismissed him without further delay, Mr. Fairweather ;" and Major Dunn moved uneasily in his chair. Mr. Fairweather did not say that he would

not send the young man to him to be snubbed and abused, but he thought just that.

"I thought, Major, it was barely possible that the youth you last employed might not suit or fill the place satisfactorily. That is why I came, thinking if he did not, there might be some encouragement for the one in my office."

"There is no probability or possibility, even, that the last young man will not suit or prove satisfactory. I don't like constant changing myself, and this young man is as smart as lightning. That goes a good ways with me. Then he is honest and straightforward, too. He has to be trusted with a great deal of money in his large collections sometimes, and many might be tempted to skip with it."

"Perhaps he is all you think him, Major, but as I read faces, he is altogether different. However, we will not argue the point longer, as the young man waits for an answer." And the junior partner left the presence of Mr. Dunn, with an unpleasant feeling of having, in a certain sense, been snubbed.

He entered his office, where the waiting applicant sat undergoing the tortures of suspense, with a slight frown resting upon his usually placid countenance.

"I regret to say that I can make no arrangements with my partner for you at present, but there are often dissatisfactions and changes in a house like this. It is possible I can do something for you in a few months, and if you will leave your name and address with me, I will do what I can for you, either here or at any other banking-house I may chance to hear of needing help."

The young man looked as if he thought those "few months" mentioned by the banker, a lifetime to wait; but he made no remark, except to thank the gentleman for his trouble. Mr. Fairweather passed a pen and piece of paper, requesting him to write his name and address upon it,

which he did in a round, legible hand, and bowing respectfully, left the office with little hope, it must be admitted, of ever obtaining a position there.

Jasper looked after him as he again passed through his office, and wondered why he had remained so long with Mr. Fairweather. He could but reflect on the strange combination of circumstances which had placed him in a position he so much despised, while that young man was so anxious to fill one of the same kind and it was denied him. He wished that the poor discouraged applicant could have taken his place, then and there.

Strangely enough, Mr. Fairweather was thinking of the same thing. He well knew how Jasper loathed his employment and that his whole being was wrapped up in art studies. He had sufficient discernment to see how utterly impossible it was for Jasper to succeed in mercantile or commercial life. And yet such blunders are constantly being made. Somehow, the round covers are put upon the square boxes, and *vice versa*, the world over, metaphorically speaking, in business matters, as well as in marriage relations.

Mr. Fairweather resolved that he would take it upon himself to speak with his partner regarding Jasper's unpleasant and ill-fitting business; and tell him that his experience in such cases had been that they proved ignominious failures. He closed his desk, and started again for Major Dunn's private office to broach the delicate subject of the guardian's choice of a business for his step-son.

"Perhaps you may think I have no right to question your management of Jasper, in regard to his being in this business, Major," said Mr. Fairweather, as he took the chair his partner offered him on entering, "and I should not have ventured to speak thus plainly, only I am convinced that the young man will not succeed in the banking business, while his mind is on Italian art galleries."

“Then he will have to be made to confine his thoughts to Dunn & Fairweather’s banking-house, instead of wool gathering in foreign countries. I have seen too much of artists, so called, in my day ! I don’t want to hear anything about artists, and I won’t have anybody under my care daubing with paints either, and the major grew red in the face with excitement and temper.

“I would tell you a story about a case something like this step-son’s of mine, if it didn’t take too long, and I believe I will, anyway. It’s about a family I once chanced to know. They were as poor as Job’s turkey, just on account of this infernal craze about art, and such things. They had to be buried by the city, and their children were left to starve, and were scattered here and there, and no one knows where.”

“Was this a family in New York, Mr. Dunn ?”

“Yes, they lived in the poorest part of the city, and I happened to know that they filled pauper’s graves. The boy very likely is drifting around after work, or maybe he has followed in his father’s footsteps and dabbles with paint.”

“Would you mind telling me the name, sir ? or is that a secret, Mr. Dunn ?”

“Oh, no ! It was Leonard Hurlbert ; but, of course, I don’t wish anything said about this affair to anyone !”

“Certainly not, Mr. Dunn ! I can keep a secret, you will find.” And Mr. Fairweather went back to his office with mingled feelings of displeasure and wonder. He took out his memorandum book, and again read the name of the young man who had left his address for a situation. It was the hated name of Hurlbert !

CHAPTER XIV.

FASHIONABLE DRESSMAKING.

Mrs. Withington has been in New York two years and a-half, and has succeeded beyond her most sanguine expectations. She has not only made a comfortable living, but she has compelled Guy to attend a college out West, and has paid his board, while he, working on a farm during the summer vacation, earned his clothing and tuition money.

He came back to the city after two years, and declared he would not stay longer at school on his grand aunt's expense. He was again seized with a mania for going into business. It was he who had applied at the house of Dunn & Fairweather, after having gone to nine other banking firms with the same object in view.

It was getting dark in the littered-up sewing room, and there were three costumes to finish before the wearied dressmaker could seek the needed rest of her bed. She arose, picking the bits of sewing silk from her merino dress, and lighted the gas. She had only one assistant with all the work she turned off in a season.

"Can you stay and help me finish these promised costumes to-night, Charlotte? I fear it will take until morning for me to do them alone. I dislike to ask any one to stay over hours, after they have worked so hard all day; but when my customers demand their dresses in an unreasonably short time, there seems no other way but for my sewing girls to help me out. I shall feel justified in engaging another girl to do finishing and machine work. Then I need an errand girl, too, for taking home the work, and running out for thread and extra trimmings. I

believe I shall put a notice outside that an errand girl is wanted. You did not tell me whether you could stay this evening, until, say nine, or half after," and the overworked and much excited Mrs. Withington hurried back to her sewing machine and slipped on the hemming attachment. The girl, although so wearied with her day's toil that she could scarcely keep her eyelids from falling together, promised to stay and help out all she could till nine o'clock.

"It is time for Guy to be back, poor boy! I fear he has had bad luck hunting for a situation, or he would have been home ere this time. I wish he would have done as I wished him and gone back to college instead of traveling around the streets of New York begging for employment."

This grievance was poured into the sewing girl's ears by Mrs. Withington for want of a more appreciative listener; but she did not comprehend the dressmaker's perturbed feelings any more than she would have understood the Latin or philosophy which Guy had mastered in the past two years.

"I must go and see if Margaret has the dinner ready. He will be cold and hungry after his weary rounds, poor fellow. I'll have her take your dinner in soon, Charlotte, too!" and the dressmaker arose again and proceeded to the kitchen to give her orders for dinner.

Presently Guy came in, wearing a tired and disappointed look upon his usually bright and cheerful face.

"Well, my boy, there is no need of asking what success you have met with to-day. Your face tells the story."

Mrs. Withington always addressed Guy as "my boy," and doubtless would if he had been forty instead of nearly twenty-one.

"I am sorry I am such a transparent creature, Auntie. In a criminal case, if I were guilty, it would seal my fate for the gallows or states prison; and then it is not always

pleasant for one's friends to see trouble and anxiety written on the faces of those they love or have an interest in."

"Have you been to a great many places to-day, looking for a position, Guy?"

"Only ten, Auntie! After all, that is not so many when one takes into consideration the number of banking-houses there are in this city. I can start fresh to-morrow, and the second day of disappointment is never so hard to bear as the first. It is only one of the contingencies of poverty and obscurity. If I had influential friends or relations to help me, I might have been successful in the first place to which I applied. But in time perseverance may overcome even these obstacles."

"You are a brave boy, Guy! I ought to be, as I am, proud of you. But on the whole I had rather you would not succeed in getting what you so much desire, until you have been at college two years longer."

"That is cruel, Auntie, not only to me, but to yourself. Young men of any spirit do not want a hard-working woman to defray their expenses at such a cost. And then, just see how such unmitigated toil is wearing your life out!"

"I should work just as many hours and just as hard, if you were in business and did not require any of my earnings, Guy. It is my nature to be industrious."

"I see there is no use in arguing the point with you. You are bound to finish yourself as quickly as possible. But I hate to have the sin at my door. If I take the money, it is only aiding and abetting you in the matter."

"What places have you called at in your wearisome rounds, my boy?"

"I cannot think of them all, Auntie. But the last one was the banking-house of Dunn & Fairweather, and the latter gentleman took my name and address and said if any changes were made, or any vacancies occurred, he would

let me know immediately. He tried his best to get me in there, I am sure of that, for he asked me to wait in his office while he went in search of Mr. Dunn, as he wished to see if he could not be induced to put me in the place of a young man, employed a week before, whom he did not think was very desirable in the place he occupied."

"I have heard that Dunn & Fairweather's banking-house was one of the largest and best in the city. If you should be fortunate enough to get in there, it would be a streak of good luck, I can tell you! I have always felt as if you would give your old grandfather reason to be proud of you some day. But the mischief of it is, he will never know anything about your life.

"If I could only see Grace and Olivia again I would not care about my grandfather. If I could see them, without even the privilege of speaking to them, or making myself known, it would be a relief to me. What a gulf there is between the rich and poor! If my father had died wealthy, grandfather would have forgiven him for taking mother away from home without his knowledge. 'There is nothing so successful as success!' some one has said. Money will cover a multitude of sins and shortcomings in most people's eyes."

"Some day I believe you will have as much money as your old grandfather ever had! Who knows but he has lost every penny of his before this time. Stranger things than that are happening every day."

"I sincerely hope not. If he has, sister Gracie will fare slim, and be even worse off than you and I are, because we are accustomed to poverty and hard work, while she would be utterly incapable of enduring it."

This conversation had been carried on between Guy and his aunt at the dinner table, and as the latter had so much to do on the customers' dresses she was obliged to finish that

night, it had to be cut short, when they arose from the table.

“There, my boy, I am sorry that I must leave you for the workroom, but you will have to entertain yourself this evening. I have got three costumes to finish, somehow, before morning.”

“Oh, it is shameful for you to work so ! Can I not go in and keep you company with my book ? Or do you think young men with books are poor companions ?

“I don’t think you would be a poor companion, in any case, with, or without a book. But I have got Charlotte there till nine o’clock to help me, and the room is so small, and cluttered up with things, there will not be room for more than we two.”

“Then I’ll go to my room and study mathematics, and try to find out the shortest and safest road to wealth, Auntie.” And he took the little student lamp and went to his chamber, saying he would see her again before he retired, and after Charlotte had gone home.

Mrs. Withington went cheerfully to her task. It seemed very hard that a woman of her years should be obliged to drudge and toil half the night. Perhaps she could have made a comfortable living with much less work ; but when customers hurry their dressmakers it has to be done, or they will go elsewhere with their patronage. The rule is that those who are obliged to support themselves by any work, either of the brain or muscle, it has to be done in an unreasonably short time, and can never be equalized through the year. It is frequently months of idleness, and then months of hurry and bustle.

“Are you going to try to finish Mrs. Forbes’ dress to-night, Mrs. Withington ?” questioned Charlotte, as the dressmaker entered the littered-up room, and attempted to put things to rights a little before sitting down to her work.

"No, indeed! Miss Forbes never hurries me to death, like many I work for. She don't care if she has it any time before New Year's day, and there is over a week to that."

"What queer taste she has. It looks so funny for a woman as old as she is, and so homely, too, to be wearing red and gold plaid, and trimmed up with so many ribbons and furbelows. One would take her for a crazy creature when she's decked out and under full sail in the street."

"I wish every lady had as good sense, and as kind hearts as she has, though," said Mrs. Withington by way of a partially concealed reproof for her young seamstress.

"Oh, she is good hearted enough, I dare say, and I wouldn't mind it if I had some of her money. But as for sense, I don't believe I'm very far behind her, if one's to judge by the way she talks and dresses."

"Well, that is none of my concern. She has the right to dress as she pleases, so long as she pays for it. My life is too full of my own care to interfere with other people's tastes and peculiarities. Her poor taste injures no one else, and if she is satisfied, others need not trouble themselves. She never tries to oppress those who work for her, nor does she demand her garments finished in an unreasonably short time. That is one thing in her favor that cannot be said of many," and the dressmaker picked up her work after making this defensive speech for her singular customer. And here it may be as well to give my readers an inkling of her history, since she plays an important part in this tale drawn from New York life.

Miss Sarina Forbes was a spinster of perhaps forty—some said fifty—but no one knew precisely, except that lady herself, and she would not tell. She was utterly alone in the world so far as kindred was concerned. Her father had been a tallow-chandler in his day, and at his death left his only daughter and heir a snug little fortune.

Her mother had died years before, and she had been house-keeper, servant, and all in all to her father as long as he lived. She was a wiry woman, and hurried about every thing she did so fast as to make time itself seem laggard. She came upon people like the wind, as if blown through a crack of the door. Ribbons fluttered from every available place on her bonnets and garments, and she prided herself in wearing the brightest colors, and the greatest variety of them, of anybody who promenaded Broadway or the Avenue. Her switch of back hair never matched the front, and she wore a "waterfall" of curls, before which Niagara is a failure in its hue. She made no pretense to high birth or education, as well she need not, since it often puzzled her to tell why people smiled (politely) when she said—which she always did in freezing weather—"my fingers is cold."

Miss Forbes boarded at a genteel house on one of the side streets between Madison and Fifth Avenues, and in the summer season perigrinated amid the wild granduer of the Rocky Mountains, or along the picturesque coasts of Frenchman's Bay in Maine, as the caprice seized her. She enjoyed everything from her dinner to magnificent scenery; and exclaimed, "Oh!" and "ah!" and "did you ever?" at the most trivial piece of intelligence.

She had been Mrs. Withington's customer and friend ever since she came to New York, and the thrifty dress-maker had her to thank for many of her customers.

The house in which Miss Forbes boarded was located opposite the one occupied by Major Dunn's family, as he had been true to his promise that he should not keep so large a share of his wealth in a mansion, and had sold the one we first found them occupying and leased a far less pretentious one in the street above mentioned. Miss Forbes could sit at her window and see every movement of the Dunn family—that is, when they came out, or when in,—

and so she kept her dressmaker well informed regarding her aristocratic neighbors.

The clock on Mrs. Withington's mantle-shelf had just struck eight, when the door bell rang furiously, causing the dressmaker to start to her feet in nervous haste.

"There, I'll warrant some of my customers have sent for their dresses, and none of them are finished!" she exclaimed, looking anxiously at the door as Margaret opened it, after giving a resolute thump.

"Who is it, Margaret?"

"Sure, mam, it's Miss Forbes. She says can she come into the workroom a minute?"

"I hope she don't expect her dress is finished, and I haven't done a thing but cut it out, yet."

Charlotte giggled to herself, thinking what a mistake her employer had made regarding her customer's not being in any haste for the dress.

"Tell her I'll see her in the parlor, Margaret. She cannot get into this littered-up place."

She threw down the costume upon which she was sewing rows of buttons and appeared before her visitor.

"Sakes alive! I didn't mean to hinder you by leaving your work and comin' into the parlor! I happened to think I wanted some old gold ribbon mixed with the cardinal for bows on my new dress, and I was afraid you would get 'em all made if I didn't take it right down to you. How are you getting on with it, Mrs. Withington?"

"To tell the truth, I have not touched it since I fitted the waist, as you said you were in no hurry if you had it by New Year's day. I worked on dresses for some customers who were in a great hurry for them. I shall be sure and have it finished by that time."

"That's all right, and I won't stop a minute to hinder you, if you're to work this evening. I think I've got another new customer for you; leastwise, I hope I'll get her.

She'll be a real good one, too. She's a friend of one of the young ladies that boards at our house; and her grandfather's very rich. They do say that this grandchild is treated better than his own wife. He gives her everything she wants in shape of dresses and bunnets, and she wants a good many, I can tell you! Perhaps, though, you can't take any more customers; you are so dreadfully drove with work at this time of the year. I only thought I'd come and tell you about it and bring the ribbon. Now don't let me hinder you another minute!"

And yet the spinster did not rise to go.

"Why, yes, Miss Forbes, I would take another customer. I could hire more help, which I need already. I can superintend a much larger business than I now have, and could get along without working so constantly myself. Who is the lady you think you can get for me?" asked the dress-maker, as her eccentric visitor arose to go, and had reached the door.

"It is Major Dunn's granddaughter, the one opposite our house. It's Dunn, the banker, of the firm of Dunn & Fairweather. Good night!" And Miss Forbes blew out of the door much as she had entered it, like a gust of wind.

CHAPTER XV.

A FATAL FALL.

Mrs. Malony's tenement was a scene of distress and confusion. Every head in the front rooms of the building was thrust out of the windows. A city ambulance had stopped before the door, and the men were taking a body from it upon a stretcher. Pansey's quick ear heard excited talking below, and she went into the hallway, and peered

out the front window. She was followed by Mrs. Malony, her hands dripping with soap suds, just taken from the wash-tub.

"Phat's iver's the matter, child? Can yez see from the windy?"

"Yes, Auntie; the city ambulance is at this door, and they are bringing in a man on a stretcher. I am afraid he is dead, by the way he lies."

The men had gotten indoors, out of sight, and they heard the clatter of heavy boots on the first flight of uncovered stairs.

"Who can it be, do you suppose, Auntie? Listen! they are coming up the second flight."

"Tramp! tramp!" sounded the heavy boots upon the third flight; and now Mrs. Malony and Pansey began to tremble with sudden forboding. They held their breaths, in an agony of suspense, listening to hear if the footsteps came toward the fourth flight. They did!

"Oh, perhaps it is our landlady's husband, killed by the effects of liquor!" suggested Pansey, seeing Mrs. Malony shaking with fright.

They reached the top stair, and set their burden down. The hallway was so dark that neither Pansey nor the woman could see who the men were, nor the person who lay so helplessly upon the stretcher.

"Is this Mike Malony's tenement, mam?" asked one of the men.

"God Almighty have mercy on us! it is, sir! Is me own Moike kilt intirely?" and the half frantic woman fell upon her knees before the man, rocking two and fro in an agony of despair.

"Perhaps it is not so bad as you think, mam. The doctor said he was alive, when we started from the building where he fell. I hope he is alive yet, mam; but he's badly hurt. Shall we bring him in now, mam?"

Mrs. Malony dragged herself to her feet again, and looked around for Pansey. The girl had gone inside to make preparations in the best room for them to bring the injured man inside.

She was now the one to comfort and help the kind woman who had unselfishly toiled for her, and tenderly cared for her when she was helpless. Pansey's heart arose in her throat, and she felt as if she should suffocate with fright and sorrow for her beloved benefactress.

The woman followed her around, helplessly, moaning and wringing her hands.

"There, Auntie ! go and sit down ! I will see that the bed is ready to put him on. He may only be stunned, and perhaps the doctor can bring him to life again."

"Oh, no ! child. It is me bad drame come to pass that oi had the night before we moved from the owld tinniment !"

By this time the bed was made ready, and the solemn tramp of the mens' feet again sounded through the hall, bearing Mike's body. Pansey asked one of them to go for a doctor, for the frantic wife could do nothing but stand over the prostrate form of her husband, and groan out the pain that was gnawing her heart.

The man hastened to do Pansey's bidding; and now the women from the floor below, and the "landlady" came in to offer their help and sympathy.

In a short time the doctor was upon the exciting scene. He felt the injured man's pulse, and shook his head.

"It's awl over wid him, docther, I know it is ! Oh, phat shall oi do ? Oh, Moike, Moike, spake to me once more, darlint ! Oh ! pace to his soul ! he was the bist husband iver a woman was blissed wid ! And now he's *dead ! dead ! dead !*" and she fell on her face to the floor, and moaned in such a frenzy of grief that every eye which wit-

nessed the sad sight, was moist with tears. Pansey knelt beside the poor creature, and putting her arms around her neck, showered tears and kisses upon her withered cheeks.

"I shall die! I shall die mesilf, and thin yez poor child 'll be lift alone intirely!" she groaned, smiting upon her breast, as if bereft of her reason. Pansey and one of the women took hold of her arms and coaxed her to come away from the dreadful sight of her dead husband into the other room.

She was led away by them without any resistance, and the coroner and an undertaker were sent for. After this she seemed stupified, and was undressed and assisted to bed in one of the other women's rooms, as the confusion was too great for her to remain in the midst of it.

For nearly an hour she continued in this unconscious stupor; and when at length she came out of it, she seemed to have forgotten what had happened. She called Pansey, and questioned her. The girl tried to pacify the poor creature, assuring her that when she was better, she would tell her all about what had happened, but that she was too ill now to talk. But gradually it dawned upon her beclouded brain, and she called piteously to Pansey to come to her bedside. She went and laid her soft little hand upon her fevered brow. It seemed like touching a furnace, Pansey thought; and she was greatly alarmed lest the stunning blow had caused brain fever or congestion.

"Pansey, child, sind for the praste to come and pray to the howley Virgin for the pace of poor Moike's shoul! Ah, child, he'll niver spake to us agin! Sure, I shall die widout him! And thin the saints protect yez, poor orphan gurrul!"

"Now, try and be calm, Auntie, dear. Never fear for me. The Lord will take care of me if I do what is right!" replied the girl with innocent faith. "I will go for the priest, myself, and then you will be sure that he will come

and do all he can for poor Mike. Do you want Father Murphy, Auntie?"

But by this time the afflicted woman was again raving with delirium, and answered only by groans and fitful, incoherent sentences. Pansey dare not leave her to go for the priest, and yet she feared that on her recovery from this wild and frenzied state, she would again ask if he had been sent for. It was difficult for her to decide what to do under the circumstances. So she appealed for advice to the woman of whom they hired the rooms.

"I'll send my boy for Father Murphy, so you can stay by Mrs. Malony. I should not know what to do for her as well as you would. And if she comes out of this bad spell again, she will call for you the first thing," said the woman.

"I want the doctor to come to Auntie, too, mam! I am afraid she will die, as she says she shall, unless something is done for her more than we know how to do."

"Has the doctor that came to Mike gone away yet, or is he in with the coroners?" asked the woman.

"I don't know! Will it be any harm for me to go and rap on the door to find out, do you think, mam?"

"I will go and see myself, Pansey, and if he is there still, will call him in to see the poor woman."

She soon returned followed by the city doctor, who was obliged to remain for a while with the coroners. He stepped to the bedside, where the delirious woman was still tossing and moaning, and put his fingers on her swiftly beating pulse in the most business-like manner. Such sights and scenes were nothing new to him. A stranger to the sick woman could see nothing in this particular case to call for especial attention and sympathy. And yet this woman had been of more actual service to her fellow-beings than most of the wealthy denizens of the up-town mansions; although too poor and insignificant in the eyes

of the world to claim even a passing notice ; while many who possess wealth and are naught save festers upon the moral atmosphere, would have been carefully nursed and tended under similar maladies.

Pansey stood trembling and silent beside the little doctor. The tears gathered in her eyes as she asked timidly :

“ Has she a fever, doctor ? ”

“ It will probably terminate in congestion, unless she can be kept perfectly quiet, and has careful nursing ; neither of which she can have here under present circumstances,” replied the doctor.

“ If you will tell me what to do, I will be very careful to obey your orders, and perhaps I can make up a bed in the kitchen until Mike is taken out of the best room to be buried. I think I could do everything for Auntie that needed to be done in the way of nursing,” pleaded Pansey.

“ You are a very young person to turn nurse,” replied the doctor, somewhat puzzled at the instinct of refinement possessed by the young girl, and wondering what she could be to this coarse looking Irish woman. “ But perhaps you will do as well as many older people could. How old are you, girl ? ”

“ I am about thirteen, sir.”

“ You do not look even that child. But are you Mrs. Malony’s niece ? I notice you call her Auntie.”

“ Oh, no, sir ! I was stolen by a hand organ-grinder’s boy when I was little a over two years old, Auntie says, and she saw me in his arms, and knew that the boy must have stolen me to beg with, and so she took me away from him and carried me to her home, and has taken care of me ever since. Oh, she has been so good to me, sir ! I can never repay her for all she has done ! ”

“ She certainly did a very good deed when she took care of you, my girl,” replied the doctor, as he noted her delicate features and blush rose complexion, through which

her clear, round, hazel eyes shone like stars. He began to take an unusual interest in this one case out of thousands. "A history, beyond a doubt," he thought to himself, still gazing at the beautiful face before him, as she watched anxiously every move the sick and suffering woman made.

"I will see what can be done by way of moving the dead man from the room he is now in. It will be just as well to put him on a table in the kitchen," and the singular little doctor went immediately to attend to those matters himself. It is wonderful how a few words of explanation will sometimes change the feelings of one human being toward another. Mrs. Malony, as the wife of Mike, who had fallen from a staging with a hod of mortar upon his stout shoulder, was not worth much consideration, even to a doctor who had a fair allowance of the milk of human kindness in him. But the woman who had fostered and cared for a beautiful young girl like Pansey, and rescued her from an organ-grinder's den, was quite a different being. Now he was anxious that she should have the best possible care and nursing, and he did not hesitate to go considerably out of his way to attend personally to this case.

Pansey went to the dish closet in the kitchen, and brought out a bowl, in which she put cold water, and with a sponge bathed the burning head of her unconscious protector. Surely it would be a dreadful thing for the young girl to be left friendless, and almost penniless in this great city. Pansey did not realize how much she had depended upon the kind old creature until now. It seemed as if some terrible obstacle had been suddenly thrown across her pathway, over which it was impossible to climb, and which was too heavy for her feeble strength to remove. She was impressed with the feeling—like many others of her intuitive sensitiveness—that her protector would never recover from this stupor and delirium. Hot tears fell

from her soft, liquid eyes, and dropped upon the wrinkled face of the unconscious woman, while she gently bathed her brow, as if her life depended upon the performance of this small act of kindness.

Suddenly her patient caught the sponge from her hand, and clenching it in her powerful fingers, wrung it dry, and then threw it across the room, muttering, "It rains, so harrud that the clothes niver'll dry this day, sure !"

In a few minutes the doctor returned with the information that Mike had been removed and taken into the kitchen, and that Pansey could prepare the room for their patient.

The young girl went immediately and quietly to this unpleasant task. She never thought about having fear of Mike's dead body in the next room, nor of his just having been taken from the bed over which she was working. Her thoughts were all centered upon the sick woman for whom she was trying to make the bed as comfortable as possible.

The doctor sat down by the small table in the room where his new patient lay tossing and moaning, and wrote out a prescription. Then he arose, buttoned up his thick overcoat, ready for a long, cold, car ride, and went into the room where Pansey was trying to put things to rights.

"Here, my girl, take this prescription and go to the dispensary and have it filled. There will not be any charges there, I suppose you know."

But Pansey did not know this fact, although she did not say so.

"Will you come again to-night, or early in the morning, doctor?" questioned the sorrowful girl, trying to choke back the rising lumps which came into her throat.

"Oh, yes ! my little nurse. I will come early in the morning. But the sooner you can get the medicine, the better. If you are able to sit up part of the night, see that

she has the doses according to directions on the bottle. It would be very much better if you could find some trusty woman in the house to take your place the last half of the night. I fear you cannot endure the fatigue of watching until morning; and you might fall asleep!"

"Oh, no, sir! I could not sleep if I went to bed. I can keep awake all night. I would not dare trust Auntie with anyone else. She is too dangerous for that."

The doctor looked at her in astonishment, wondering how it was that such a stripling should understand things that many older heads could not comprehend. He bade the little self-appointed nurse good-night, and went down over the long flights of dark stairs, and out into the cold and fresh atmosphere with a sense of relief to his lungs.

Pansey asked the "landlady" if she would remain with her sick charge until she went out to the dispensary, named by the doctor, and procured the medicine. She promised to do so, and they sent for some of the other tenants to assist in getting the unconscious woman into the room which had been prepared for her by the little nurse, and then the brave young girl put on her hat and coat, and went fearlessly out into the darkness to the city dispensary for the medicine.

In a few minutes she returned again, to find her "Auntie" in a frightful state of excitement, which amounted almost to frenzy. Pansey's voice seemed, however, to calm her ravings, and she was coaxed to lie down and keep quiet. The young girl prepared the medicine, and after considerable coaxing and pleading and perseverance on Pansey's part, she at length succeeded in making the distressed creature swallow it.

The night wore on slowly after the other helpers had left her, and retired. She counted the hours, which seemed days in length to her. The doses had to be administered every twenty minutes, until the patient slept and grew

calmer. She scarcely sat down at all, lest she might fall asleep. The stillness (except the heavy breathing of the sick woman, and an occasional groan from her) was oppressive, and she began to count the clock tick until her tired and worried brain reeled with the monotonous sound. She had never noticed how solemn and lonesome the continual tick! tick! tick! was before. How circumstances will change the aspect and sound of everything to us poor, helpless mortals.

She did not know how it would turn with her kind benefactress. What if she should die before morning and she there alone with her, and powerless to help her? She had never seen any one die since her remembrance. She heard a rattling sound in the sufferer's throat, and she almost feared to look at her, feeling that this might be the last hour. But it was only the effects of the opiate in the medicine, which had thrown her into a troubled sleep. She was not accustomed to the different effects of medicines upon human ailments, and therefore her fright was terrible to endure when she heard this new, strange sound. She fell upon her knees before the restless sleeper, clasped her hands over her breast, and tried to pray. Her sobs and sighs were obstacles which choked her utterance. It seemed to her as if they were something tangible, filling her throat with heavy lumps, like lead. She could articulate only the one sentence: "Oh, Lord! look down in pity from Heaven, and save us, for Christ's sake!"

If her patient slept, she was not to awaken her to administer the medicine. Thirty minutes had passed since the last dose was given. It seemed hours and almost days to the frightened watcher. But this simple petition for help from Heaven, seemed, in a degree, to relieve her distress, and make the long hours more endurable. There come moments in everyone's life when the pressing need of calling on stronger support than anything earthly can give,

drives the tempest-tossed soul to prayer. Heaven pity those who have no belief in the succor of the Almighty, and His protection when the pitiless storm rages !

The poor woman over whom Pansey was watching had been working unusually hard, and had been exposed to cold and stormy weather in her rounds hunting for patrons. It was the faithful old creature's last illness. When morning broke upon the awakened and toiling thousands in the great city, the night's suffering and fever had wrought the change in the sick woman's face which sometimes years do not accomplish. Her pulse was weak and low now, and her gentle nurse, who had faithfully kept vigil all night, watching every wearied breath, looked on in astonishment at the havoc that night of torture had wrought.

She called to her in trembling tones :

“ Auntie ! Auntie ! do you know me ? Can you not speak to your little Pansey ? ”

A partial opening of the heavy lids, and a faint moan, which died away on the stillness like a whisper from the eternal world, was her only answer.

The rays of the morning sun came in through the half-closed blinds, and slanted across the dying woman's face, revealing the dark and swollen rims under the eyes, and imparting a livid hue to her sunken cheeks.

“ Oh ! if the doctor would only come ! ” sobbed Pansey, in a smothered whisper. She listened for every footstep on the stairs, but none broke the stillness until the milkman came up who supplied the woman in the other rooms. She went to the hall door and looked out as the milkman went down again, and her heart sank within her as she again turned to the bed, and placed her little, white, trembling hand upon her patient's forehead. It had commenced to feel chilly with a cold moisture.

“ Why don't he come ? Oh ! if he would only come before— ” She could not finish the sentence. Sobs

choked her utterance. She fell upon her knees once more, and buried her face in her hands. At length she caught the sound of steps upon the creaky stairs. They approached nearer. A gentle tap came on the door, and then it opened and the long hoped for doctor stood bending over the kneeling girl. But it was all over. And the sympathetic little doctor, looking upon the closed eyelids, murmured in low tones : “ And after life’s fitful fever, she sleeps well.”

CHAPTER XVI.

ANOTHER SEPARATION.

“ Dear me ! How I miss Guy, now that he has been with me for a few weeks. I almost wish he had not come home at all. After one has had a taste of happiness, it makes ordinary life harder to bear, it seems to me.”

“ Yes, it is hard ! For my part, I wish I could a seen him. He must be a right good feller, I’m sure, if you’ve had the bringing of him up. I guess widders care more for boys and young men than us maiden ladies do. Most young fellers I know anything about are proud up-starts, and don’t have any more respect for them that’s older than they be than a wild Ingun. But I don’t doubt but this nephew of yours is very different from such trash as I’ve met in my day, called ‘ young gentlemen ! ’ ”

This speech was delivered by Miss Forbes, in Mrs. Withington’s fitting room, where that lady was trying on a costume of fearful and wonderful design, and which represented about as many different colors as the coat belonging to Joseph of old. But her dressmaker was not

responsible for this mixture of hues, nor was she yet answerable for the bad taste of making the skirt from striped material, running perpendicularly down her thin, straight figure.

This was a device of the customer, for Miss Forbes exacted the privilege to select the colors to be employed, as well as the style of her garments. Sometimes her dresses were marvels to behold. The obstinate spinster could see no reason why purple, yellow and cardinal could not be combined in one article of dress, with just as good effect as tints which blend more artistically. But Mrs. Withington had learned that it was useless to argue the matter with her singular customer, and so humored her whims without raising any objections.

"I thought your nephew come from college with the intention of staying in New York, and was going into a bankin'-house, or somethin' of that sort, Mrs. Withington? Wasn't it a sudden change of his mind that took him back to college again?"

"It was for the lack of obtaining the position he sought that he had to go back again. But I almost drove him away this time, to finish his four years' course. I I don't know as he will enter any profession when he gets through. He has got his mind set upon mercantile or commercial business of some kind. If he cannot get in a bank, he may look for something in a wholesale commission-house. But a college education I was determined he should have! The boy is a great student. He loves to work out difficult problems in algebra and pore over Latin and German. If anybody ever deserved success, he does!"

"Why on earth did he choose such a place as Kansas? I should have thought he'd a gone to Boston, or some such place to college."

"He thought he should like the climate there; and then he could find a better chance during vacations to work on

a ranch to help pay his expenses. Poor young men east, who are trying to work their way to learning, have to go into summer hotels as waiters and porters. Guy is too proud to do this, and he had rather till the soil, and drive horses attached to reaping and mowing machines, he says."

"I guess he's right about that. Young men with learning ain't fit to be waiters and lackeys for rich folks. It is better to boss horses than to be bossed by men, I should say! Now don't cut these ribbons off one inch, please! I want long streamers from the shoulder of this frock; one of purple and the other cardinal." And Miss Forbes dropped into a chair and fanned herself vigorously, after having stood first on one foot, and then on the other for fifteen minutes, to have her angular and one-sided waist fitted by the deft fingers of the much amused but aggrieved modiste.

"You spoke about bringing me a new customer, Miss Forbes, when you were here last winter; Major Dunn's granddaughter I think you said. Have you heard anything more from her in regard to it?"

"No; I can't say as I have. The young lady that knows her is engaged to one of the clerks in her grandfather's banking-house. I don't know how they got to know one another, but they seem pretty intimate. In fact, two much so to last long. The young Miss Dunn seems to take possession of her foster brother, a son of the major's present wife. But I have thought she flirted a little with the young clerk that this Miss Felix is engaged to. If that is really the case, their friendship won't last long. Dear me! it seems awful hot in here, or else I'm getting excited." And the capricious maiden lady again spread her monstrous feather fan, and raised a breeze which sent the dressmaker's trimmings and patterns fluttering about the room.

"I am sorry you are so uncomfortable, Miss Forbes. I

would raise the window, if it were prudent for you to sit by it. It would be dangerous, I am sure ; the air is so cold outside.

“ Oh, never mind me ! I shall get cooled off in a few minutes. I always feel this way when I stand to have a gown fitted. It is harder work than washin’. Though I hain’t done a washin’ in twenty-five years. Not since pa died, leastways, and that’s nigh onto twenty-five years. How time does fly ! Mercy on me ! it don’t seem no longer ago then yesterday sense I used to run down to pa’s tailor shop to carry his lunch busy days, when he couldn’t leave the shop without losin’ lots of trade. Folks said I wan’t bad lookin’ then. There was a young man by the name of Hurlbert that said so too. It’s queer aint it, Mrs. Withington ?” and the odd and angular maiden gave a nervous little laugh, and looked at her reflection in the mirror opposite her chair.

“ Hurlbert ! did you say, Miss Forbes ?”

“ Yes, mam, Hurlbert ! but he’s dead now, and gone, poor feller ! He never married ! Neither have I, you see ! and some folks call me an old maid, and laugh at their own wit as they call it. I wan’t an old maid twenty-five years ago, when I knew John Hurlbert, and carried pa’s lunches down to the shop. And it’s such a short time ago, too. Time must seem awful long to them that call me an old maid. I was five-and-twenty then, or thereabouts. Oh, I—I mean I have sort of forgotten just how old I was at that time ;” putting her hand over her mouth, as if she had criminated herself in a court of justice, and was anxious to retract her words.

But apparently her auditor was deaf to this unintended confession of her age. She only answered :

“ It is singular, but my Guy’s name is Hurlbert, and he had an uncle John, who died in a hospital from an injury received on a railroad.”

Miss Forbes sprang to her feet, and stared blankly at her dressmaker. "You don't mean to say that you are John Hurlbert's sister, Mrs. Withington!"

"No, mam. But I am John Hurlbert's aunt. Guy is my grand-nephew; Leonard Hurlbert's son, who was a younger brother to John. They have noble blood in their veins on the mother's side. She was the daughter of an earl, the Earl of Rumford. It was a runaway match from England, and, of course, the daughter was disinherited for her folly."

"I don't know as it's folly for a woman to marry the man she loves, if she can git him. I know I should'er done the same thing if I'd been in her place. It was whiskey that stood in my way to happiness. I suppose I no need to tell you that. You must know about your nephew's weakness. I had to give him up, and it wan't long afterwards he was killed on the railroad, when he was the worse for liquor. I hate whiskey! It stood between me and everything that is worth livin' for;" and Miss Forbes' thin lips trembled with the agitation this singular revelation called forth.

"It is strange how near you came to being my aunt-in-law. I never heard much about the younger Hurlbert, and didn't know whether John's father was dead or not. I suppose he is, ain't he?"

"Oh, yes; he died several years before Guy's father was married. Then Leonard went away from New York and taught painting and drawing; and as ill luck would have it, he fell in love with the daughter of a rich man, to whom he gave lessons. I never knew the particulars, but they ran away together from Chicago and came here in New York to live. I knew nothing of his marriage or trouble, till one day, about New Year's time, I received a letter from his wife that Leonard was dying in poverty and want in a tenement house in the poorest quarter of the

city, and begging me to come on here from my home in Massachusetts to take the youngest child home with me till some provision could be made for her. I went, but had lost their address before I started from home. I tried various means to find them in vain. Then I took a street car on Third Avenue, and found Guy in the car selling morning papers. I asked the newsboy's name after I had bought some papers, and he told me his parents were dead. I thought he didn't look like the common herd of New York newsboys. His answer settled the question, and I took him to the hotel with me. His mother had died from cold and starvation a few days after her husband, and the three children were left alone in their sorrow and destitution. But before I found Guy the old grandfather had come on and taken the girl next to Guy, and a missionary had adopted the Baby Olivia and taken her out to California to live. So there was nothing for me to do but take the remaining orphan away with me."

"Dear me! what a sad tale! But what was the grandfather's name?"

"That is what none of us know. Poor Guy was so troubled he did not find out when he carried away Gracie. But most likely he would not have let him know. He would be afraid that some day the poor boy might hunt him up to find his sister. He has forbidden all communication between the Hurlberts and his family. He hated the boy and youngest girl because they looked like their father. Gracie favored the mother's side of the family, and so she was the one to be taken to the rich man's home."

"He didn't know that noble blood ran through the Hurlberts' veins, I suppose. It's a great pity that the other children are such poor vagrants because they look like their father," said Miss Forbes, sarcastically. "But if

Leonard Hurlbert favored John, the old man had no reason to be ashamed of his looks ; that's certain !”

“John and Leonard did not resemble each other much. But Guy's father was a good looking man ; only always pale and sort of spiritual looking. I don't think his health was ever very good, or that his constitution was strong enough to endure hardships. But the poor fellow must have had a terrible struggle to keep those dear children from being beggars. For my part I don't know why such things are permitted. It makes me rebellious, sometimes, when I think how unequally things are divided.”

“I feel that way too, often ; but that's all the good it does. Some people can marry the very ones they want, and others have to put up with jest who they can get, or go without ! For my part, I had rather go without, Mrs. Withington.”

“So it appears ! But perhaps you are just as well off. Woman with worthless husbands are much worse off than those who have none. And there are many worthless ones, in these degenerate days ! For my own part I happened to draw a prize. But I did not have him long. Consumption took him off in less than three years after we were married, and before he was able to save up anything. I was left with only one hundred and fifty dollars after the funeral expenses were paid ; and I have had a pretty hard time of it ever since to get along. My own health was very poor for several years after his death, and that increased the hardship.”

“It's a great pity that consumption, or something else, didn't take off the worthless ones instead of the good ones. But that would never happen ! That would give deserving people more happiness than they could appreciate, perhaps. I don't know !”

“There was never anything truer than that the good

die first, and they whose hearts are dry as summer dust burn to the socket !” replied the dressmaker.

“ Well, I shall have to go ! I’ve stayed too long, now ; but somehow I got interested to know about the Hurlberts. I never expected to see anybody again who knew them ; and what is still better, to meet my poor John’s own aunt. Oh, I’ll see about that granddaughter of Mrs. Dunn’s the first chance I get. I suppose they’ll all go away to the sea-shore by the middle of June. They always do. But perhaps I can get her custom for you for next Fall when they get back.”

“ Why, it is over four months to the middle of June, Miss Forbes ! I should think she would want new dresses to take away with her. I have made a great many nice costumes for Newport and Saratoga ; although the ladies tell their friends, when they are at these resorts, that their dresses are all made in Paris, and that they cost fabulous sums. You know it is the correct thing for society ladies to say they have their costumes imported. It sounds better they think.”

“ Well, for my part, America is good enough for me, and so are New York made dresses. But I really must go now, and no more fooling, about it ! Oh, by the way, I notice you have got a sign out your door for an errand girl. If I know of any good, smart child, looking for something to do, I’ll send her to you, Mrs. Withington. Good day ! I’ll be down again next week !” And the spinster sailed out, her ribbons fluttering in the breeze.

CHAPTER XVII

ALONE.

The snow was sifting down in infinitesimal flakes, drifting upon one curbstone and sweeping over the next, leaving it bare and icy. Pansey stood alone at the window of the desolate tenement, watching the whirling flakes and listening to the moaning of the wind around the casements. It was the day after the funeral, and the house seemed more like a dismal tomb to the friendless orphan, than a habitation for living beings. Even the driving storm outside looked less cheerless, because there was action in that, and something which appeared more like life. Her sudden bereavement seemed a terrible nightmare from which she was struggling to awake, but could make no sound. "What was she to do? where should she go?" were questions that haunted her brain continually. To-morrow the month would be out, and the rent of the two rooms expired. It was paid in advance the first day of each month. To-morrow would be the last day that Pansey had any right there. Of course, the woman must rent it to new parties as soon as she had an opportunity, and the slip of paper with the notice, "Rooms to let on the top floor," was already up beside the entrance-door below. "Something must be done!" Pansey thought, that very day, even if it did storm and blow a gale. What should it be? The girl had a comfortable, warm wool sack, which Mrs. Malony had made over for her out of one of hers, and although it was considerably faded and old-fashioned, it would keep her from freezing, and protect her from the storm. It was impossible for her to stay in that desolate room all day alone, and their "landlady" could not have

her in her room, because her husband, as she called him, was in a drunken stupor, and housed for the day. Pansey would rather go out in the fiercest storm, than be near this coarse and brutal man. She turned from the window and looked around the desolate apartment. The fire had gone out, and there was no more coal to build another. She went to the dish closet and took down a small tin cup from one of the shelves, and looked inside. It was the cup in which her benefactor had kept change for bread and milk and such small necessities as she got for each meal. She turned out the pieces of money on the shelf, and counted them over. There were forty-five cents, all told. Then there was the furniture, such as it was. There was no one to claim it but her; for neither Mike nor his wife ever contracted debts. They lived on what they earned, were that ever so little. But what was she to do with these things? It almost broke her heart to think of disposing of them at a second-hand furniture store. Every piece that the kind creature who had just died ever touched, seemed sacred to the grateful girl's heart. But she had no place to put them, and they must be gotten away from there at once. She put on her hat and sack, locked the door, and went out into the storm. She turned her steps eastward, and went into one of those streets where nearly every shop is that in which such articles of household use are bought and sold. She entered one of the dark and foul basements in quest of a buyer for the furniture to which she had fallen heir. A stout, coarse-looking German woman sat upon a low stool pulling the hair out of an old cushion, and throwing it upon the filthy floor. A half-naked, bow-legged boy, his face black with dirt, was creeping around, and pulling himself up by the woman's gown, only to tumble down again and roll over on the floor.

“Vat you vant, miss? to puy some verniture?”

"No, mam ; I came to see about selling some. Are you the cwner of the shop ?"

"Mine hoosbant is, miss. Vill you sot you down dot lounge on ? I vill speak to mine hoosbant."

The woman went into a dark den at the back of the room, which looked like a closet to Pansey, and called to Jacob. A small, dried-up looking being emerged from the darkness, his clothing covered with small bunches of curled hair and excelsior, and pulling a black pipe from his mouth, trotted up to Pansey, and asked her errand.

"Do you sometimes buy second-hand furniture, sir ?" she ventured, trembling from head to foot, at finding herself in this dismal den, and beside such a fiendish looking being as this second-hand furniture dealer.

"Vell, yeas, sometime ven I puy dem cheap ! Haf you some dings to sell ?"

"Yes, sir ; some 'chairs, two beds and a few articles of kitchen furniture, sir !" and Pansey mentioned the house where they were.

"I will valk me ofer mit you, and look at does dings. Maype I puy dem !" and he shamled back to the dark den to get his coat and hat.

Pansey, followed by her strange escort, hurried up the dingy steps, and out again into the driving, sifting snow storm. The air was thick and black with the falling flakes. They sifted into her eyes, and melted upon her pink cheeks. Every now and again a rude blast of wind would almost turn her around in its fierceness, and she had all she could do to keep upon her feet. The little black skeleton of a man trotted on after her like some evil genius, in swift pursuit. She turned the corner of Broome Street upon an icy curbstone, and fell headlong into the drifting snow. There were very few pedestrians out in that part of the street, and so she struggled to regain her equilibrium without assistance, till the little man had reached her. He

put out his stained and bony hand toward her, and grasping it, she pulled herself upon her feet again.

“Haf ve mooch more valk to dake, miss? It vash booty pad valking already. Der verniture vill pe booty dear cost, if I preaks my neck goin’ to see it, vonce!”

The inhuman wretch did not for a moment consider the exposure and trouble of the young girl he was following to the desolate tenement; nor did he care for the heart-ache which the sale of these few articles would cause her. He thought only of himself and his personal interests.

After being whirled around several times and barely escaping with unbroken bones, Pansey reached her door, and commenced to climb the long flights, nearly out of breath, and her clothing and hair as white as Santa Claus’ with a cold coating of snow. The little black demon followed on after her to the top stair of the last flight, and paused panting, for her to unlock the door.

“Mine gracious! mine preath is shust oued of mine pody. Vere is dot verniture I gomes all der vay dose stairs up to see?”

Pansey’s heart misgave her, as she thought perhaps the man might be angry with her for bringing him up those wearysome stairs to find so little.

“Here is one of the beds, sir, and there are the chairs. Then there is the other bed and kitchen things out in the next room. Will you step in here and look at them? I am sorry if you think it is too much trouble to come up here for so few things; but I have to sell them to-day, or to-morrow at the longest,” said the young innocent, never dreaming that the crafty man would take advantage of this obligation to sell at once.

“Then dose verniture moost pe sold shoost at once? Vell, I makes you an offer for der whole lot in von lump. I vill pay you tree tollars, mine young freint, and dake it away mit me to-day. Vot you say to dot?”

She paused a moment to consider the offer ; and then remembering how hard, and almost impossible it would be for her to go out in the storm to find another customer, told him in a fit of desperation, that he could take it, but that it seemed dreadful cheap. And yet three dollars was more money than Pansey had ever possessed at any one time in her life. It was something like Esau's selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, but she knew of no better way to do at the time. Twenty dollars would have been a very low price for the things. This the man knew very well, but her extremity was his golden opportunity, and he was not the man to lose the chance. He went down stairs to find a drayman to take away the things, and the excited and half-dazed girl looked around for the little personal articles which belonged to the dead woman and herself. She feared if she did not collect them together and secrete them, the grasping man might carry them away with the other things. The first thing she secured was the little paper box containing her trinkets and the half-dollar, which Mrs. Malony had made her put back after she bought the calico for her new dress.

Presently the man came back, followed by a truckman. They pulled down the beds and rolled up the mattresses and quilts and tied them with stout cords. Pansy followed them around, trembling and sorrowful, hugging her treasured little box tightly in her hands. The man took out a greasy pocket-book and unrolled some bills. Then selecting a two and a one dollar bill from the roll, he handed it to the excited girl, saying :

"There's der money, and a pig brice, too ! It vash vorth five toller to gome dose stairs up."

The truckman, who had known Mrs. Malony and Mike from having his express stand just around the corner, watched his chance to ask the girl how much she had received for the furniture. On being told, he looked con-

siderably surprised and drew his face into a scowl, that Pansey did not exactly understand.

"Do you think that was too much for what he has bought?" she asked innocently.

"You should 'er had twenty dollars at the lowest figger, girl. But it's too late now to do anything about it. He's got the goods and you've took the money for 'em. But it's too d'rned bad, though. He'll sell 'em agin fer fifty dollars, I'll be bound."

This little confidential chat was broken abruptly off by Jacob's entering the kitchen to ask Pansey if the things were all out of the closets.

"Everything you are to take is, sir. The other things are Auntie's and Mike's clothes."

"Der glose pelongs mit the odder things, miss. I told you I give so much for dat whole lot."

"Yes, sir; but only the furniture and kitchen things. It did not include the clothing."

"Dot clodings I will haf, my lettle frient. I don't gomes dose stairs up for noddin' in dot snow-storm."

Pansey looked at the truckman with a perplexed and serious face. He was a good-hearted fellow and had resolved to interfere in the distressed girl's behalf.

"The clothes don't belong to you, and you can't take 'em away from the girl while I'm here!"

"You vosh a booty druckman to dry and chead the man that hired you, and baid a pig brice to take away dose things oud't." But the grasping dealer was a coward, as are all such creatures, called by the misnomer of men.

Finding that the truckman was decided in the matter, he went down the stairs muttering to himself all the way. The truckman followed with the last piece of furniture on his shoulder, and Pansey opened and shut the door for him, thanking him for his interference to save the clothing from the clutches of the crafty Jew dealer.

Immediate action was her only salvation. She would have gone mad, she thought, if it were not for the work of picking up the few remaining articles, which were of no especial value except to herself, on account of their association with the dim and dreamlike past. She worked as if her life depended on speed and forgetfulness of everything but the picking up of these coats and pants, dresses and old shoes, that had been worn by the dead man and woman, whom Pansey revered with a kind of hallowed memory.

At length they were all collected together, and they did not make a very formidable parcel, so far as size was concerned at least. Pansey was astonished to find how few things it required to keep Mike and his wife clothed decently. Then what was she to do with them? She could not start out in the street looking for a place to work with a bundle of old clothes under her arm, and she knew of no place to leave them, except with the woman of whom they had hired the rooms. The girl felt afraid to go to her door and ask her to keep them till she knew where she should be. She feared the man might come out of his drunken stupor, and drive her away from his door, or perhaps beat her. She had never seen Mike the worse for liquor; for, as his proud wife had often said, he was a "sober, dacent man." Pansey had a mortal terror of an intoxicated person. While she stood over the troublesome parcel, puzzling her brain as to what she should do, there came a rap upon the kitchen door.

"Come in!" called Pansey, half afraid to look up as the door opened, lest it might be the "landlady's" husband coming to drive her out of the rooms.

It was the little doctor who had attended Mike and his wife in their last hours.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you, doctor! I feel so lonesome and forsaken to-day!"

"I thought you would be, and that is why I came,"

and the singular little man took off his hat, as if he were in the presence of some society lady, who would expect it of him.

Pansey noticed for the first time that he walked lame, as he limped over to the stove—which was cold, as well as the only remaining article left in the room—and sat down upon it. She had scarcely noticed before what he was like in features or form. She perceived now, that he was considerably gray, and by no means bad looking, although below the medium height.

“What has become of your furniture, child? I see it has all been removed somewhere.”

“I have sold it, sir, to a second-hand dealer a few streets below this. I have to get out of here to-morrow, not to come back again, and I was obliged to sell the things. I hated very much to part with them, but it was the only thing to do.”

“Did you go out in this storm, child, to find a purchaser?”

“Yes, sir; and he came and took them away about an hour ago. I don’t think he was very honest, for the truckman who moved them told me they were worth twenty dollars; and then, when he went away, he tried to make me give him these clothes, and would have taken them, if the truckman had not told him he should not rob me of them, for he would not let him.”

“How much did you get for the furniture, child?” questioned the doctor.

“Three dollars, sir.”

He knit his brows sternly at this surprising information, and replied:

“The robber! He ought to be arrested for taking such cowardly advantage of an unprotected orphan girl.”

“It is a pity I sold them; but I did not know how much they were worth, and I was afraid he would be very

angry if I refused to sell them to him after he came up here in the storm to see them."

"If I can find him, they will have to be surrendered again. He cannot keep them lawfully, under the circumstances."

Pansey looked at her defender timidly, saying: "I am afraid such a wicked man as he is might do you some harm if you should go to his shop to compel him to pay a fair price or give them up. It is down in a basement, dreadfully dirty and damp. It is the most dismal and dark place I was ever in before, and there are queer looking people there."

"And yet you went in there, my brave girl, and faced the dangers."

"Yes; but I did not say anything to irritate him. I only asked him to come up and look at the things, and see if he wanted to buy them."

"Can you give me the street and number where he keeps, child?"

"No, sir; I do not remember the number. I don't think he would tell you anything about the furniture either. Poor Auntie used to say nobody could ever get justice from a Jew dealer."

"You are a singular child, Pansey! But what are you going to do now, my girl? Have you a place to go when you leave here?"

"I am going to try and find work of some kind, sir; and if I do not get a place this afternoon I can stay at the mission-house to-night."

"My poor child, I fear it will be several days before you find a situation. It is not such an easy matter as you imagine to obtain work in New York, unless you have references. If I can do anything for you I shall be glad to. But the trouble is I do not go among the class of people who hire help. They are all too poor for that."

"Oh, sir, I am sure I shall soon find something to do—just enough to earn my lodging and meals. Auntie has taught me to do a good many things, and I could run of errands, and take home customer's washings for some one who does laundry work. I am willing to work at anything that I can do."

"It is such a pity that Mrs. Malony could not have been spared until you were older and more experienced in the ways of the world, Pansey."

"Yes, indeed, sir! It is a dreadful thing that she had to die, and poor Mike was killed. There don't seem to be anything for me to live for now," and the sorrowful girl sat down on the box in which she had put their clothing and sobbed bitterly.

The sympathetic little doctor went over to the weeping girl, and stroked her soft auburn hair, saying in a choked voice:

"There, there, child! do not cry so! There will be some way provided for you without a doubt. Have you had any lunch to-day?"

"No, sir; I am not hungry, and I wanted to get all these things picked up and put away somewhere. I cannot stay here much longer for there is no coal, and the fire is out, and even if I could spare the money to get more, it would be of no use, because I leave here so soon."

"Put on your coat and hat, and come with me. I have not been to lunch myself, and I should be glad of your company. It isn't very pleasant to eat alone."

"You are very kind, sir, but I ought to be seeing about a place to work; and then there are these things; I do not know yet what I shall do with them."

"Can you not leave them for a while with the woman in the next room, till you find out what you are going to do?"

"I suppose I could if her husband was not at home in

bed, so badly intoxicated that I am afraid to go in there," replied Pansey.

"I am not afraid to go in and ask her. I am sure she will do so small a thing as that for a friendless orphan. If she will not, she doesn't deserve to live in a Christian land." So saying, the doctor went on his errand of mercy to the next room. He met with a cordial reception from the woman, and she willingly took the little box of clothing, and said she would see that it was taken care of till called for by its owner.

"Now, Pansey, child, put on your things and come with me. You must not stay in this gloomy place any longer. If I had a home I would take you to it; but after lunch you can go to the mission-house and stay till to-morrow morning; and then we will see what can be done for you."

They went out together, and the doctor hailed a car, put his young charge in and followed after, where they rode to his lunching place.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEARCHING AND FINDING WORK.

The next morning broke clear and cold after the severe snow storm. It had turned to rain during the night, and there was a heavy coating of ice upon the pavements and fences.

Pansey had slept at the mission-house the previous night, where she went after taking luncheon with the doctor. He had promised to call at the mission again the next night, and see what she had found for herself, and if possible do something for her by way of recommendation,

But the brave girl did not think it wise to depend upon anybody's promises. She felt that if a place was to be had, she herself must find it. She ate her breakfast in the long dining-room with the other poor and destitute waifs who had been gathered in there and provided for, and after prayers, started on her wearisome search for employment.

She walked cautiously along over the slippery pavements, and up into the Bowery ; but it seemed as if her feet slipped backward two steps where they made one forward, and several times she fell head foremost on the hard stones.

She picked herself up, nothing daunted, and struggled on. Pansey had never in her life been farther up-town than Cooper Institute, and she felt very anxious to see what was beyond there. She turned into Fourth Avenue, and walked on till she found herself in Union Square, somewhat frightened and bewildered. The ice glittered upon the branches of the trees in the park, and the people she met were so finely dressed, that she began to feel troubled and mortified at her own faded sack and calico dress. She had put on a small gray fur collar that one of Mrs. Malony's customers, for whom she washed, had given the prudent woman for her little charge, and the good creature had cut it down in size to fit the girl's delicate neck. But Pansey began to notice the incongruity of wearing a fur collar with a faded calico dress, and she almost wished she had not come up where the people looked, and apparently felt, so grand. Poor girl ! she had but just commenced to learn her humiliating lessons ; bitter lessons which the poor and proud have to learn, sooner or later.

The unsophisticated girl had but a vague idea how she should set herself about looking for what she wanted. She turned her head from side to side, and peered into

the store windows at the glittering glass and silver wares, and the fans, laces and ribbons in the dry and fancy goods houses. She had never seen anything half so enchanting in her short life—which had been spent in the poorest and most prosy part of the city. There was nothing to call her above the street in which she had last lived, and so this was like a new world to her wondering eyes.

She stopped before a large jewelry establishment, and gazed enraptured upon the glittering gems. A young lady and gentleman passed her, and entered the store. The young lady turned and looked at the odd little figure, standing there with her nose flattened against the glass, and her eyes aglow with the pleasure which the brilliancy of the scene afforded her.

“What a queer looking girl!” remarked the young lady to her companion, “and such a guy! See! she wears an old faded sack, a summer calico dress, and fur collar! Did ever one see such a combination?”

Her companion turned again to look at the singularly garbed girl, and replied:

“Yes; but she has a handsome face, and one not easily forgotten, either.”

“You are very peculiar in your tastes. For my part I don’t see any beauty in a little street urchin like her;” and the proud belle gave her head a haughty toss by way of reproof to her gentleman companion, as they entered the jewelry store together.

Pansey’s quick ear caught every word the couple had said about her.

“I suppose I must look like a fright to those rich people in these old, faded clothes. I wish I had not come so far up-town,” soliloquised our little heroine, and the tears gathered in her hazel eyes, and fell upon her blushing cheeks. She turned from the enticing window, feeling like a culprit because she had wasted her precious time,

which ought to have been devoted to searching for employment, and saw a woman dressed about as oddly as herself, only representing a great deal more money, looking down upon her with a pitying face.

"What are you crying about, little girl? Are you cold or hungry? Or do you wish you could have some of these costly jewels?"

"Neither, mam! I felt ashamed of my old faded sack and dress! A fine-looking lady just went in the store with a smart gentleman, and the lady said I looked like a guy. Doesn't that mean shabby, or something of the sort, mam?"

"Never mind, child, what it means; she was no lady to say such a rude thing as that; I wouldn't cry. Where do you live?"

"I do not live anywhere, just now, at least. The woman who took me when I was a baby has just died, and I have come up-town to see if I can find some work to do for my lodging and meals. I suppose you do not want a girl like me to work for you, do you, mam?"

"What kind of work could you do, my girl?"

"Oh, I can run of errands, sweep, and wash dishes, build fires, make beds, or do almost anything but cook, wash and iron. Oh, I should be so glad if you wanted a girl like me. I would try and do everything you required of me;" and Pansey's eyes sparkled with a newly kindled hope, as she looked into the kind but plain face of the singular appearing woman.

"Can you come along with me now, if I should try and find a place for you?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! Any time you please."

"Well, then, come and get in the car with me. The sidewalks are too slippery to walk. I am not in need of a girl myself, but I know of a lady that wants to get a nice

girl to run errands. Are these the best clothes you have got, child ?”

“ Yes, mam. They are all I have got that will fit me. Auntie left a dress and cloak when she died, but I cannot wear them till I am larger than I am now.”

The woman questioned her little protégé still further, and learned the sad story with which the reader is already familiar. When the two arrived at the place where an errand girl was wanted, both were wiping the tears from their eyes.

The woman pulled the bell knob, and was soon admitted to the reception room.

“ Oh, is that you, Miss Forbes ? How do you do ? I am driven nearly out of my senses with ball dresses. I do want more help the worst way, and I have not found an errand girl that I could keep, yet, either. I have tried three since you were here last, and they were either so lazy or dishonest that I was obliged to discharge them !” and the discouraged dressmaker glanced at the young girl seated on the sofa beside Miss Forbes.

“ Well, I don’t know’s you’ll thank me for bringin’ you another one to try, Mrs. Withington ; but I found this little girl down on Broadway, or on Union Square, and she told me she was lookin’ for work. I have questioned her about her family, and she tells me the woman that brought her up has just died, and she has no home, and she want’s to get a place to work for her lodgin’ and meals. I guess she’s a pretty good girl, by her talk, though a body can’t always tell by that ! Do you want to try her ?”

Mrs. Withington turned again to look at the now trembling Pansey ; for she felt that her fortune hung in the balance of the dressmaker’s opinion of her. She blushed crimson, and stood up to show Mrs. Withington her height and proportions.

“ What is your name and age, my girl ?”

"I am near fourteen mam, but I do not know my own real name. The good woman who took me away from a hand-organ grinder, did not know my parent's names. She called me Pansey Bloom, and said I must have been well born of Protestant parents. That is all I know about my birth, mam. But if you want an errand girl, I think I can suit you. I will try very hard to, mam, if you will only take me."

Mrs. Withington could but wonder at the remarkable difference between her handsome, refined face and her coarse, shabby clothing; but she was too sensible a woman to refuse the girl a place on account of not being properly clothed. She was perfectly willing to give her a suitable outfit to wear about her house and for running on errands. She felt certain that the young girl was honest and conscientious by the looks of her beautiful face, and so told her she would try her for a week, and if she suited, would give her a permanent place.

Pansey was almost out of her wits for joy. It seemed as if Heaven had suddenly opened to her, and given her a glimpse of its happiness.

"Oh, you are both so kind that I do not know what to say to thank you. When may I commence work, mam?"

"Can you come this afternoon, after you have gotten your things from the place you last stayed?"

"I was at the mission-house, near the street we lived on, last night. I sold Auntie's furniture, and the time was out that she had paid the rent, and I could not stay there any longer;" and she told the sympathetic Mrs. Withington her tale of sorrow, caused by the sudden death of Mike and his wife; as well as how the Jew furniture dealer had cheated her in the sale.

"Well, child, here is some money for your car fare, if you wish to go down and tell them that you have found a place."

"I have money for my fare, mam, thank you. I promised the doctor who tended Auntie and Mike that I would see him at the mission to-night, and tell him what success I had ; but he will not be there before five o'clock, so I can stay and do whatever you have for me till then, mam."

"Well, child, you may sweep down the front stairs and hall, and then dust them nicely, after you get rested, and I will see what I can do about fixing you a warmer dress."

"Oh, I am not tired at all, mam. I can go right to work. I know my dress is faded and shabby, but poor Auntie did not have money enough to dress me any better. It was hard for her to get enough to pay the rent and our living after we moved into the new tenement. So she was not to blame. Poor Mike worked very hard, too," apologized the brave defender of her dead benefactors.

"Oh, yes ; I dare say your clothes did very well for the neighborhood where you lived, but it is different up here, my good girl. Now, then, if you are ready, here is the brush and dust-pan."

The girl took her weapons of warfare against uncleanness, and with a cheerful and smiling face went about her new employment.

"That is a remarkable looking girl, Miss Forbes. Her complexion and features are as delicate and refined as if she belonged to one of the best families of the country. But the poor thing has evidently had a hard life by the looks of her clothes, and the thankful way in which she accepted the menial situation of sweeping and scrubbing floors and running errands. I wish there was some way of finding out her real name, and where her parents lived. I am going to do the best I can for her if I find that she is honest and faithful. Such poor waifs always remind me of Leonard Hurlbert's children, and what misery they would have been subjected to, were it not that I providentially

found Guy, and the missionary took the Baby Olivia to a good home in the West. And as for Gracie, I hope she is happy with her strange old grandfather. At all events, she has what money she needs, I suppose."

"I only hope that the two girls have fallen into as good hands as this poor thing has, Mrs. Withington. I took a great interest in the girl when I first seen her looking in the windows at the pretty things in the Union Square jewelry store, with the tears glittering in her handsome round eyes. She's what I call a perfect beauty; but that's nothing in her favor. Sometimes it's a curse to be a beauty! It often turns out that way; but she looks good as well as handsome. Just dress her up once in some bright colored gown and ribbons, and see what a picture she'd make. I'm goin' to try it some of these days, if she turns out to be a good girl. She'd look like a wax doll if she was dressed like some of the rich folkses children, and everybody'd turn in the street to look at her."

Mrs. Withington thought to herself, that she hoped Miss Forbes would not insist upon rigging up Pansey according to her own taste in colors and furbelows; but she only answered that she was glad to have her take an interest in the friendless orphan.

As for Pansey, she somehow or other, by intuition, perhaps, felt that she had fallen into good hands, and was accordingly thankful. She did her work thoroughly, passing her brush many times over the same spot in the carpet, lest a particle of dust should escape her vigilance, and when it was finished, went to her employer in quest of more.

"You can set the lunch table for Margaret, to-day. She has a large ironing to do, and it will be a great help to her," and the good woman led the way to the kitchen to show her "hired girl" the new acquisition.

Margaret was a singular being, but she happened to

take kindly to the young assistant in domestic duties, and it was quite a relief to be rid of laying the lunch table, as Miss Forbes was invited and expected to stay on this occasion. Our young heroine showed herself equally as proficient in setting the table, as she had been sweeping stairs and carpets; although the poor thing had raised a blister in the palm of her delicate hand with the broom.

As soon as lunch was over, the two kind women put their heads together, to see about fixing up a dress for their young charge, while she was queening it over the dish-pan out in the kitchen. Miss Forbes ripped, and Mrs. Withington cut and sewed, and soon a dress was blocked out ready for her to try on, from one of her employer's cast-off suits. Then she was called in from scrubbing out the sink to have it fitted upon her round, lithe figure. She was taken wholly by surprise, and her face beamed with delight as she saw the blue and brown checked cheviot, ready for her to try on. She wondered if it could be possible that she was to have it as a gift! It seemed too good to be true. She felt as if she had come suddenly into fairyland, and that she was to be transformed into a modern Cinderella, with Mrs. Withington and Miss Forbes for her fairy godmothers. She surveyed herself from side to side in the long mirror, before which so many of the dressmaker's customers had admired themselves in her snug fits; and she was astonished at the change even this unfinished frock made in her figure, and even her face.

"I am afraid I shall not be able to work enough to pay for this nice dress, beside my lodging and meals, mam. I have got the three dollars that the furniture dealer paid me, but I am afraid to spend that for clothes until I know whether I shall suit you or not!" she said modestly, awaiting anxiously for her employer to speak.

"Don't worry about that, child! Mrs. Withington don't expect you to pay for this. She wants you to look

respectably around the house and when you have to go out of errands !" spoke Miss Forbes.

Mrs. Withington was too busy paring and pinning the soft fabric upon her little charge, to notice what the girl said. Pansey wondered if she had offended her that she did not answer ; but she felt in any case, she had a friend in the singular woman who had taken her there and recommended her to the dressmaker.

At last the tedious process was over, and the young girl slipped off the new garment, and donned her faded calico again, ready for her next task. But her employer told her she had nothing just then for her to do about the house, and she could sit by her and thread needles, while she basted the seams.

With this light employment, Pansey was delighted, and her little fingers were just adapted to the delicate work. She threaded all the needles on the cushion, and then looked up for more needles to thread. Mrs. Withington began to think she had drawn a prize—an industrious errand girl. And yet, she could but look upon her as different from ordinary girls who filled such positions. Some undefinable magnetism seemed to draw her toward this friendless young creature. She felt the weight of the Master's injunction to his faithful disciples : "Feed my lambs !" "In some way or other the Lord will provide" for his helpless children. Sometimes he sends the ravens to feed them in desert caves ; and sometimes he puts it in the hearts of his people to feed and clothe and cherish them.

When it was time for Pansey to go down to the mission-house, the dress was finished and ready to put on. Her employer went to a closet, took a soft, warm shawl and wrapped it around her shoulders ; then she gave her a snug little muff to carry, and started her off in high spirits to inform the kind doctor of her good fortune.

CHAPTER XIX.

BAD NEWS.

“A letter for you, Auntie. The postman just brought it,” and Pansey handed the little black and white messenger of unpleasant news to the expectant Mrs. Withington.

It is six months since we left these two prominent characters of this romance, in the littered-up workroom on the day Pansey was engaged as errand girl. The storms and winds of winter have given place to the scorching rays of an August sun. The doors and windows are all open; and even with the air that can be obtained in this way, the heat is oppressive and wearisome. There are no unfinished costumes lying around the room to-day, for nearly all of Mrs. Withington's customers are at summer resorts. It is a slack time with the dressmaker; but she needs the rest, and is glad of it. Miss Forbes is out among the Rocky Mountains, and will not return for several days, and so business will remain slack with the dressmaker until the first of September.

Pansey has been as faithful a helper as ever woman employed, and has not only secured for herself a permanent place, but has so grown into the woman's heart that she scarcely would know how to get along without her young protégé. She had been permitted to call the dressmaker “Auntie,” as she had called her other protector and friend, and the orphan girl felt not only a sense of care and protection, equal to that bestowed by Mrs. Malony; but there was also a something in this woman better suited to her sensitive nature and refined tastes.

Not only had Mrs. Withington fed and clothed Pansey, but she had sent her to school until it closed the month

previous for the annual vacation. And she felt that in this case, as well as with her experience in sending Guy to college, that it was like casting her bread upon the waters. This young girl, who had not been afraid to work, was also ambitious to study and improve her mind, and this repaid her for the sacrifice she had made in sending her to school. Miss Forbes, too, had done her duty bravely in helping clothe Pansey. Nice dresses and hats and shoes cost money, and it requires a great many to keep a growing school girl in good trim.

But both the unselfish women felt that it paid to dress this young girl. She was careful of her things, and then she looked so pretty in stylish and good garments. To Pansey it seemed like living in a new world altogether. To be looked at with envy, and sought after and praised by her school companions, was a pleasure she had never dreamed of till now. Still she had not gotten past taking home the dresses for Mrs. W.'s customers; nor did she grow vain or conceited over her change in fortune. She was now past fourteen, and had commenced to develope into young womanhood in form and manners. Six months of happy surroundings and faithful tender care, not as a servant or menial, but as an own daughter and companion, had wrought wonders in the girl, and she had gained confidence in herself, sufficient to attempt and assume duties from which many older people would shrink. But let us take a look over Mrs. Withington's shoulder, as she reads Guy's letter, written in a trembling hand, and looking very much as if it were done in bed. He says :

MY DEAR AUNTIE :

I am sorry to be obliged to write you about my recent illness of malarial fever, but I feared if I postponed replying to your last kind letter any longer it would give you more uneasiness than to inform you of my illness. I am

much better now, and able to sit up a portion of each day. I was just beginning my summer's work on the ranch after vacation commenced, and I was taken down with this fever. I have had good care, and so you need not be alarmed about me. When I am able to ride, I think I shall go away with one of the men who works here, as it will be less expensive than going home, and many less miles of travel. Give my love to the little Pansey Blossom you have told me so much about in your letters, and please *do not* be troubled on my account. As I am still a little weak and nervous I will not attempt to write more at present; but will let you know very soon again how I am getting on. Till then, good-bye, and much love from your affectionate nephew,

GUY R. HURLBERT.

Mrs. Withington finished this epistle and dropped it into her lap with a groan, which startled the anxiously waiting Pansey to her feet.

"Is there bad news in the letter, Auntie?"

"Yes, my dear! Poor Guy has got the malarial fever and has been sick in bed over three weeks. That is why he has delayed writing me."

"Oh, I am so sorry for him, out there among strangers," answered Pansey, wiping the saline drops from her round cheeks. "How I wish he were here, so we could nurse and care for him. I can do a great many things for sick people. The doctor trusted me with Auntie Malony the night she died. Can we not get him home and take care of him?"

"I am afraid not, Pansey. It would be a long, hard journey all the way from Western Kansas. But perhaps we could go out to him—or I could. It costs a great deal of money to go such a long distance. But that is not to be considered if the boy's health is at stake. I don't like to go without you, either, for there is no one here for you to

stay with, as all my friends and customers are out of the city."

"What a bother I am to you now, Auntie. I am real sorry; but perhaps I can find some place to stay; although, if it didn't cost so much, I should like to go with you and help take care of Mr. Guy;" and Pansey put her arms around the troubled woman's neck, kissing repeatedly her pale and moistened cheeks.

"Well, I must see what can be done at once. I fear he may die out there alone, without proper care. But I shall manage to take you with me when I go; I should feel lost without my little Pansey's sunny face to cheer me in the lonesome days of the journey."

This declaration of love met with a hearty response in the grateful girl's own heart, and she gave vent to her pent up emotions in kisses and sobs and protestations of never ceasing gratitude to her benefactress.

"Oh, but Auntie, I wish Mr. Guy could have the city doctor who was called to Mike and Auntie Malony. He is so good and kind. But, of course, he cannot; unless he comes home."

"Poor boy! he will have to put up with just what he can get in shape of doctors out there. That is the troublesome part of sickness in those far western States and towns. If I could get him home I should be thankful enough; but that is impossible in his present state of fever and weakness."

"Is he so very badly off, then, Auntie? Could I hear the letter read?"

For answer Mrs. Withington handed Pansey the letter, saying she might read it for herself, as her own voice was too much choked with sobs to attempt reading it aloud. The girl read it through, and at the close her dimpled chin quivered at thoughts of the suffering writer out there at the

mercy of comparative strangers, and helpless. Then she read the signature, and with the usual curiosity of her sex, asked what the R stood for.

"Rumford, my dear. Guy is a Rumford, always and everywhere. A real nobleman by nature as well as birth. Oh ! Fate is cruel ! cruel ! cruel !"

Pansey looked at her employer in blank astonishment. The Rumfords and noble blood, were all Greek to her.

"What is a nobleman, Auntie ?" she ventured, timidly, blushing to the roots of her hair at her ignorance of such matters.

"There are no titled noblemen in this country, child. But Guy is descended from English nobility. When you get far enough advanced in your studies to understand history, you will learn all about lords and dukes and earls, and their standing in the English government."

"And then you are descended from the nobility, Auntie ?" questioned Pansey, assuming an awe-struck attitude and expression.

"No ! the nobility is on the other side of the family. But I must not talk longer of titles. Something must be done at once, about going to that dear, sick boy ;" and the distressed woman, sprang to her feet, as if standing would help matters along faster than sitting.

Pansey caught the standing panic, too, and hurried around over the little room with the words ringing in her ears that "Guy was a Rumford, everywhere, and one of nature's noblemen," while she moved chairs and brushed things that were perfectly free from dust, with a peacock feather duster, which she took from its place behind the hall door.

Notwithstanding the oppressiveness of the heat, the excited woman and girl went at once to making preparations for an early departure. Mrs. Withington overhauled a

small leather trunk, in which some of her winter clothing was packed, and carefully picking out the monstrous chunks of camphor gum at the bottom, laid them aside for future use, and commenced putting in the garments and toilet articles she thought they would be likely to need for their long and tedious journey. Pansey was delegated to hunt the articles up, and pass them to her as she wanted them. They both worked with a will, forgetting, for the time being, how sticky and uncomfortable they were. A mixture of tears and perspiration rolled down the good lady's cheeks, and fell upon the snugly packed garments; and Pansey's face grew as red as a scarlet poppy, while she paused every few minutes to apply her pink bordered pocket-handkerchief, and take in a few whiffs of air, raised by a palm-leaf fan.

At last their task was completed, and then both sat down for a short breathing spell.

"There's the letter-carrier again at the door, Auntie!" said Pansey, in surprise, and soon his shrill whistle of warning sounded in their ears.

Pansey ran to the door, and took the large yellow envelope from the man's perspiring hand, while he stopped for a minute to mop his face with a much soiled handkerchief.

"The pavements are hissing hot in the sun to-day!" he remarked; "but us poor fellows have to travel over them all day, jest the same." And he turned to the next block and again sounded his shrill whistle.

Pansey stopped to look after him for a moment, with pity welling up in her great, liquid, pathetic eyes; and then went in with the letter to the anxiously awaiting woman.

"More bad news, I fear!" she said, her hands trembling so she could scarcely break the seal.

Pansey waited breathlessly, dreading to know what was inside that ponderous envelope.

Mrs. Withington unfolded the half sheet of foolscap paper, and—contrary to the habit of most women who are very anxious to know who the writer is—read the signature at the end. A smile broke over her face, and then the watchful trembling Pansey knew there could be no bad news contained in the second letter. It read as follows:

Dear Misses Withington

i take my pen to tel you that i am ought amongst the wilds of colorado and i am Havin a verry Good time who do you think i met well I met mager Dunn and his Grand-auter i seen somebody walkin pro and con on the piazzer of the windsor hotel last Night and think's i who can that be he looks sort of natral i got up and went Out and shure enuff it was the mager as large as Life a walkin and prom-nadin with his Hands behind him. and the young Lady was settin in a big chair readin a paper covered novel i took it to bee leastwise. i dont now jest how Long I shall stay here im in denver but I forgot to put that at the be-ginnin of this letter its putty hot Here and i gess i shant stop mor'n a cupple of Weeks Longer I send my love to Pansey and hope you are Havin comfortble wether in New york from your obedent Servent Sarina Forbes p s i forgot to menshion That I see the young lady to Speak to her about your dress makin and she Said They was goin to the See shore after they went Back to New York to git the young man and His Mother they are goin to mount dessert down in maine that's all the nuse i can Think of jest now S. F.

This amusing missive, which was so characteristic of the singular writer, afforded considerable relief to Mrs.

Withington's over-strained nerves; for she had made up her mind before opening it that some one had written to tell her of Guy's death, or dangerous condition, out there among strangers; and finding in the place of that this originally spelled epistle of friendship, she was both comforted and amused. But it was now near three o'clock in the afternoon, and they were to start from Jersey City ferry at six on their westward journey.

Portentious black clouds began to roll up in the west, and the rumble of distant thunder was occasionally heard above the din of the street noises. A slight breeze had started up, which soon turned into a strong gale. The windows banged and blinds flew back and forth, opening and shutting as if they were something alive. Pansey flew to the windows and closed them hurriedly, flashes of lightning blinded her eyes as she fastened the springs.

"This will cool the air, and make it much more pleasant for starting on our journey," spoke Mrs. Withington, sitting as calmly and composedly, looking out upon the blustering elements, as if the sky were clear and the wind nothing but a gentle zephyr fanning her brow. Pansey felt a little timid, it must be confessed, and she drew her chair close to her "Auntie," and kept rather quiet. The rain had now commenced to fall in large drops, pattering upon the parched pavements, which dried them up in a few seconds, so thoroughly had they been heated that day in the blazing sun. Some one appeared at the door and rang the bell, as if in great haste to get in. Pansey hurried to open it, and returning ushered in the little city doctor, who remained till they started, and then accompanied them to the ferry.

CHAPTER XX.

A RAILROAD DISASTER.

"Give me one lower berth to the right over the Kansas & Chicago if you have it!" spoke the fatigued and perplexed Mrs. Withington to the clerk at the sleeping car office window in Kansas City.

"No berths left, madam!"

"What! not even one left, sir?"

"Not one, madam."

"What shall we do now, Pansey?" questioned the woman, turning to the young girl, whose eyes were nearly stuck together with dust and cinders, and looking so sleepy and worn-out that her protector and friend wished she had found some place for her to stay in New York, and left her behind, while she made this fruitless and tedious journey to her nephew. "What *shall* we do?" she repeated.

"I don't know, Auntie, unless we make the best of it and sit up all night in one of the other cars."

"I suppose we may as well make up our minds not to expect any rest or sleep till we get back home again!"

"Stand aside, madam, please! You are blocking the way to the ticket office!" puffed a belated, fat old gentleman, hurrying in the direction of the window from which our friend had just turned, to make the same useless request.

"The way may as well be blocked, for all the good it will do to go there, if you are looking for sleeping berths!"

retorted the woman, vexedly; mentally pronouncing her fellow traveler rude in speech and manner.

"No berths left!" repeated the clerk, as each new victim passed in review before the open window to hear the same unpleasant answer.

"Then why don't you shut the window instead of fooling people by keeping them waiting around here to take their turn at hearing you say: 'No more sleeping berths!'" shouted the irritated gentleman before named, drawing his face into a knot of scowls. "This sleeping car arrangement is a delusion and a snare," he went on, pushing right and left with his pulpy arms, without being able to force an opening anywhere in the excited mass of humanity who would not accept the unwelcome intelligence from other than the lips of the clerk himself.

"The whole thing is a fraud, I say!" still protested the corpulent gentleman, unable to smother his disappointment at the prospect of sitting bolt upright with another passenger sharing the same seat from Kansas City to Chicago, or remain over night in the stifled city. "What's the use of standing around here," he continued, as if he had taken it upon himself to address the waiting crowd. "The Palace Car Co. are short five hundred berths—I might say five hundred berths worse than nothing, just at the time they are needed. To-morrow night I'll be bound they will run half-a-dozen empty cars!"

But all these complaints from the old gentleman, combined with the unspoken wrath of the much-fatigued travelers, did not mend matters one whit. Either they must remain in Kansas City on a stifling August night, where the air was thick with the smoke from raging fires all over the western prairies, or be crowded like cattle in the close cars at a time when cheap fares were packing every

train over the Kansas and Chicago railroad from Kansas City eastward.

The western train from Denver had just come in—being three hours behind time—and the uncomfortable and weary passengers poured out upon the platform, hurrying and tumbling over each other, laden with bags and valises, each struggling to be first at the sleeping car window, as well as in the front ranks to claim their baggage and have it rechecked for the train soon to start out for Chicago.

“The next proceeding is to see about our trunk, I suppose; but it doesn’t look now as if we could get to the baggage check window in a week. There seem to be about five thousand people ahead of us. I cannot imagine how they got here so quickly after the train came in from the West.”

The poor lady seemed to be too late for every comfort necessary for traveling on this particular day.

“Where is the check, Pansey? I must make an effort at least to get the trunk rechecked in season to go on the next train.”

The girl produced the check from her little hand satchel and her chaperone ranged herself in line to await her turn to get a chance at the baggage-window.

Everything was pandemonium around the station. The baggage truckmen were shrieking at the top of their lungs for the fatigued and worried passengers to “clear the track!” Groups of women were shaking hands and exchanging kisses; mothers were parting with sons and daughters, choking back the tears, and pleading that they “would write just the first chance they had to send a letter back;” others were hurrying to the restaurant to snatch a bite of food and swallow a cup of coffee; some struggling with a doubtful mixture, by courtesy called lemonade, and which has a piece of the peel and a fly upon the top swim-

ing around in a circle after each other ; plump matrons were chasing after truant poodles that had slipped through the leading strings and were sniffing at every lady's dress to find their mistress ; women were pushing their way through the crowd, carrying babies in their arms, looking for friends they didn't seem to find.

"Where's the baggage-master?" shouts one. "A ticket for Chicago," demands another. "We can't get any sleeping berths!" echoes a third. "Dear me," groans a fourth. "I wish we were safe at home," pipes Pansey ; "I am so tired and sleepy and we have got to ride all through another night without getting any rest, and you are so worn out, Auntie, dear."

"Never mind me, child ; if we can get the trunk in time to go on this train I shall be thankful. I can stand one night more of being kept awake. But I am sorry for you, poor little chick."

"Why, Mrs. Withington, where did you come from, and how do you happen to be so far away from home ? And if here ain't Pansey, looking as though she wished herself anywhere but here !"

"Why ! is that you, Miss Forbes ? I am sure it is providential that we have met you on this tedious and fruitless journey. We have been on to Western Kansas to find Guy, poor boy ! He is sick with malarial fever, and I could not rest until we went out to him. But he did not think of our coming, and so had been taken home with one of the other workmen on the ranch. I am so disappointed and troubled about him ! I suppose you are in the same boat with the rest of us—no sleeping berths?"

"Well, now, I can't say as I'm in a boat, but I must confess I hain't got no sleeping car accommodations. But if there's any truth in the saying that misery likes company, we might be in a cheerful state of mind. There is about a

thousand more in the same plight. For my part, I'm afraid we shan't even get seats, or a place to put our hand-bags."

"Hand-bags are my *least* concern. I have got to get to that baggage window, somehow, and have my trunk rechecked," replied the dressmaker.

"Give me your check. I'm thin, and I can squeeze my way through the crowd better than you can. What's the use of waitin' your turn? Nobody else does!" and the angular spinster took the check from her friend's hand, and worked her way to the baggage window, going sideways and backward by turns, or whichever way she saw a loop-hole into which she could step to bring her nearer the desired object. Meanwhile Mrs. Withington and Pansey went into the ladies' waiting room to get some drinking water, from which the ice had long before disappeared.

Just then the stout old gentleman before alluded to, bustled into the waiting room, and went over to where a young lady was partaking of some half-melted ice cream.

"Come, come, girl!" he exclaimed, hastily, "don't wait to finish that stuff. If we're not on hand in season, we shall be cheated out of seats in the car, as well as sleeping berths."

The young lady handed her empty ice cream glass to the ebony waiter standing by, and hurriedly drawing on her traveling gloves, followed the lead of her protector toward the long train of cars, headed by two hissing locomotives, the noise of which started the passengers into a brisk trot to get on board as soon as possible.

Close behind the old gentleman and his young charge were Miss Forbes, Mrs. Withington and Pansey, who quickened their speed in common with the other belated ones, at sound of the furious hissing and puffing of the iron monsters.

"Let us try and get as near together as we can," spoke

Miss Forbes to Mrs. Withington. "We should have a gloomy journey of it, if we got scattered in three different seats among strangers."

"I wish we could secure reclining chairs," replied her friend, looking wistfully up at the windows of those coveted cars, only to find all the seats occupied by more fortunate travelers, who seemed to be congratulating themselves on their sagacity and forethought.

"Land sake's alive! If there ain't Major Dunn and Miss Helen! I wonder if he's got sleeping berths?" ejaculated Miss Forbes.

"Is that fat old man with the young lady, Major Dunn?" asked Mrs. W. in surprise. "Why that is the same rude old fellow who told me to stand aside at the sleeping car window, saying I was blocking the way. It cannot be that he has got berths, since I was there first, and the clerk said there wasn't one left."

"You don't seem to remember that money and a high sounding name can buy most any comfort," replied Miss Forbes, with considerable irony in her tone. "Them palace car clerks can generally find empty berths at sight of a ten dollar bill," she continued, knowingly.

But greatly to her surprise Major Dunn and the young lady entered one of the passenger cars, which looked the least crowded, and by considerable changing around, obtained seats near together.

Our three friends followed close behind, and through the diplomacy of Miss Forbes—who never stood in the cars when there was an opportunity for appealing to the gallantry of the sterner sex—seats were obtained for the three. The spinster adroitly managed to induce two young men who were seated behind a lady alone, to go into the smoking car. Then she tucked Pansey beside the lady, with a bird cage each side of her and a pile of bags

at her feet ; while she and the dressmaker settled themselves in the young men's places.

The train was scarcely three miles out of the station, and was getting up good speed, when a colored porter from one of the rear sleepers entered their car, and passing through the aisle, scanned the faces of the passengers from side to side. He stopped in front of one of the seats, and raising his cap, jerked out :

"Major Dunn, sah ?"

"That's my name. Were you sent from the palace car conductor ?"

"Yes, sah. A section for you and the young lady, sah. Shall I take your baggage, sah ?"

"Yes. Take this and this and this and that," passing him numerous bags and umbrellas, and a quarter besides, with considerable bluster.

"Come, Helen !" he said, touching the young lady's shoulder in front of him. "We've got a section, after all ; and I think we are pretty lucky, too, when there are about five hundred who can't get one."

"There ! what did I tell you ?" exclaimed Miss Forbes, with much irritation, to her traveling companion. "I knew it ! I knew it ! I *knew* it !" she continued, hotly. "If there is any comfort to be had in this world, that selfish old man is bound to have it."

Presently a personage, in vulgar parlance termed a "baggage smasher," whose complexion was very much like a mixture of milk and molasses, came through the car whistling "Sweet Violets."

Miss Forbes tugged at the skirts of his linen coat to attract his attention. She felt in a complaining mood just then, and thought perhaps he would be a sympathetic listener to her tale of woe.

"What's the reason they don't run sleeping cars

enough to accommodate the passengers?" was her first question.

"Don't know, madam. Hain't got nuffin' to do wid the sleepin' cars myself, madam."

"Young man, this car's dreadful hot and stifled, can't you give us more air? We shall all die here, before morning, at this rate."

"I think it's real cool and comfortable here, mam," replied the baggage fiend.

"Some folks might think a blazin' furnace was cool and comfortable after they got a little used to it!" retorted the irrepressible Miss Forbes.

The young man so pitifully appealed to passed on, and as he reached the door yelled, in an unintelligible voice:

"Next station's Gumbletewumblety."

"What did he say the next station was, Pansey?" asked Miss Forbes, seeing that her other traveling companion was sleeping, her bonnet crushed against the window-sill.

"I didn't understand," answered the tired girl, half asleep.

"I wish I knew," persisted Miss Forbes, rising and stretching her neck out the window, as if it were a matter of great importance that she should know precisely where they were. She seemed to think that any little diversion was preferable to pondering over their really uncomfortable and unhappy condition.

The air was very foul and stifled.

Babies were worrying with faint, low moans, or wailing with lusty cries; while tired mothers and sleepy nurses were inventing every possible method of pacifying them without being able to accomplish their purpose. In this infected atmosphere, ladies groaned with sick headache at every sudden jerk of the train, and there were even fever

patients propped up by pillows and quilts in these uncomfortable seats, carefully attended by solicitous friends or relatives.

Among the passengers was a western farmer, whose face was bronzed and weather-beaten by exposure to the blazing sun. He was bathing the feverish brow of a young man with water from a tin cup, and wetting his parched lips occasionally with a moistened sponge.

Miss Forbes watched them with much solicitude for the poor sufferer, and finally remembering that she had some oranges in her satchel, took out two of the best ones, and went over to the sick man with them.

"Has this poor young man got a fever, sir?" she asked pitifully, addressing the elder man.

"Yes, mam. He's got the fever and ager. He ketched it out in Kansas, where he's been a workin' this summer."

"Is he your son, sir? I see you take pretty good care of him."

"Oh, no, mam. He's a college feller as worked on the same ranch as I did. He says he's ter wuk his way fer his larnin'; he hasn't no money, nor no friends ter help him."

"Would he like a couple of oranges to moisten his lips with? I don't think they'll hurt him, if he only swallows the juice."

"How much do yer tax for 'em, mam?"

"Why, my good man, he is more than welcome to them. I don't have fruit to sell. That's the train boy's business!" curtly replied the amazed Miss Forbes.

"Oh, wal! then if you wus goin' ter give 'em to him, I'm sure he'll be glad on 'em."

"Here's some oranges as this good woman sez yer welcome to."

The young man moved his parched lips in thanks for such an acceptable luxury; for oranges at that season of

the year on a western train were indeed an expensive luxury, in which the poor could not indulge, and both these passengers gave every evidence of poverty.

"It is very good of you, sir, to nurse this young man so tenderly, when he's no relation to you. Do you know where his home is ; if he's got one ?"

"Wal, mam, his aunt, what brought him up, lives in New York ; but she's poor and hain't able to take care on him. She gits a livin' by makin' woman's clothes and sich things. When we started we thought 'twas too long a way for him to go alone ; so I'm takin' on him to my home in Ellenois, couple o' hundred miles from Skago, mam."

"Well, if I can do anything more for the poor young feller, jest let me know, for it's bad enough to be in this hot and crowded car if a body's strong and well."

"Guy, the kind lady says she'll do any favor she can fer ye, and I know yer 'er thankful to her."

"Guy ! did you call this young man, sir ? What is his other name, sir ?"

"Hurlbert, mam ; that's his last name."

"Guy Hurlbert ! It must be that's him ! I don't believe there's another by that name ! And then he's sick with malarial fever, too !" soliloquised Miss Forbes, turning again to the man, who was carefully feeding his sick charge with small pieces of the orange, dripping with juice upon Guy's shirt front.

"If this young man is Guy Hurlbert of New York, and has an aunt by the name of Withington, I can tell him that she is in this car, on the other side, over yonder, asleep."

The fever patient started up as if inspired with new life, and told his informant that he must be her nephew.

The spinster returned to her sleeping traveling companion and told the news, shaking her vigorously the while to

make her understand her meaning. When at length the tired woman came to her senses, and learned the truth, she started up like a sleep-walker, and went over to her surprised nephew.

She threw her arms around him, showering tears and kisses upon his wasted and feverish cheeks.

The kind and coarsely dressed man who had taken it upon himself to conduct Guy to his own home, arose and offered Guy's new found relative his seat, saying he would go into the smoking car and "take a few whiffs at his pipe."

Mrs. Withington begged the good Samaritan to accept her heartfelt thanks, and urged him to take a five-dollar bill for his trouble. This he flatly declined, saying he was only doing what was his duty by a fellow worker.

Pansey was now fast asleep, and Miss Forbes carefully avoided disturbing her, although it was exceedingly hard for the much jaded spinster to sit bolt upright and hold her peace in such an unpleasant state of affairs. She longed for some sympathetic listener to pour out her complaints to. She had tried the conductor, the baggage-master and the train boy, but they had all appeared deaf to her pathetic tale of suffocation and weariness.

Finally she attempted to amuse herself by peering out of the car window into the dense darkness of the night. She could see nothing save the glittering sparks which flew thick and fast from the hissing locomotive, as it plunged and clattered and whirled on through the darkness.

"Dear me! How like lightnin' we are going; and it's as dark as a black man's pocket, too. What if there should be a smash up?" and she shuddered and looked toward the sick young man, who was resting his burning head on his aunt's motherly shoulder.

And still the train plunged madly on, panting and hissing like a monstrous black demon in mortal agony.

A happy thought occurred to Miss Forbes' active brain. She would hunt up the parlor car conductor, and see if he could be bribed by a ten or twenty dollar bill to give the suffering fever patient a sleeping berth. A lower berth, too, she had set her mind upon demanding. She laughed to herself as she thought of her own sagacity in plotting this wily scheme. She arose, and after looking cautiously around to see if Mrs. Withington noticed her, she plunged her way through the rocking train, catching now and again convulsively hold of the seats to balance her tottering footsteps. She opened the door and was greeted by a gust of wind and a volley of smoke and dust, filling her nostrils and eyes.

But nothing daunted, she stepped over the coupling irons to the next car, while the wheels and springs under her feet clattered and smashed together as if the whole train was convulsed by some tremendous force from beneath. She pitched and plunged on through the next car, and after crossing another shaking platform, found herself in the parlor sleeper, where the tired passengers were snoring or tossing restlessly, amid the dim light behind the curtains. The conductor, seeing a person enter from the other car, who did not belong in the sleeper, arose from the dark corner in which he was trying to catch a nap, and came toward our brave friend.

"What do you want in here, madam? This the parlor sleeping car, and no one who don't hold a ticket for a seat or berth has any right in here."

"I understand that perfectly well, sir; and so there's no need of you tellin' me about it!" answered the resolute and irrepressible Miss Forbes. "You are the person I came in to see, though."

“Well, what do you want of me, madam?”

“It is possible I may not be quite so poor as I look! I see you think my comfort and convenience ain’t worth considerin’. I want to get a sleeping berth for a sick young man in one of the other cars. He’s been settin’ up all night in one of them hard cramped up seats with another passenger beside of him.”

“Well, madam, I can’t make sleeping berths to order! There hasn’t been one left in this car or the one back of it, since three o’clock this afternoon.”

“I happen to know better than that, sir! I know that Major Dunn, of New York, tried at the ticket office in Kansas City for a section in one of these cars, and he was told they were all sold, and after he had been in the car where I was half an hour, you sent a colored porter in to tell him he could have a section, and he followed the porter out, with all his traps, into the sleeper.”

The man winced a little at this straight talk from the well posted woman, and he commenced to make a lame apology.

“Well, madam; this was an extra case, and he paid ten dollars extra for it, too!”

“That’s just what I’m trying to get at, sir! But he couldn’t have had one, if there wasn’t one, could he! You just said you couldn’t make them to order; and it’s not very likely you could! Now, I’m willing to pay extra—more than that rich and selfish old man paid you—if I can get a lower berth for this poor, sick young man.”

“How much would you be willing to pay if I could find you a berth, such as you want, by changing around one of the other passengers into an upper berth.”

“I’ll give you fifteen dollars,” answered the cunning woman, thinking she would start at the lowest figure she

thought he would be likely to accept, and advance it afterward, if necessary.

He hemmed and hawed awhile, and then, evidently fearing he might lose the fee altogether if he did not take the offered reward, said he would see what he could do for her if she would wait there a few minutes till he went in the next car. He soon returned with a lower berth ticket, and handed it to her, saying "Fifteen dollars, please,—and no questions asked."

She gave him the money cheerfully, and went back to tell the good news to her traveling companions.

"I've got a nice lower berth in the parlor car for your sick young nephew. Can I help you about moving him in there?"

"Why, I did not think it possible to do such a thing, Miss Forbes. But I am so thankful to you for your perseverance."

"Never mind the thanks; let us get him into it as soon as possible;" and the eccentric woman commenced to gather up his things to take along herself. But the well-feed conductor had sent the porter in after the young man and his luggage, and the grateful sufferer, followed by Miss Forbes and his aunt, went into the parlor car to take possession of this unexpected luxury.

Mrs. Withington removed Guy's warm and close-fitting coat, and replaced it by a loose dressing gown, which she had purchased for him on her way out. Then she placed some lemonade and oranges beside his berth, and the two women went back to await as best they could for the approach of daylight.

When they returned to their seats, they found Pansey wide awake, and anxiously peering into every secluded corner of the car searching for them.

In a short time Mrs. Withington was sound asleep

again. But neither Miss Forbes or Pansey could close their burning eye-lids, and so the spinster related to the young girl the singular way in which they had discovered Guy in the same car, and afterward secured a nice lower berth in the sleeper for him.

"I will go in to him and bathe his head and wet his lips with cold water. It must be dreadful torture to have a fever in such a hot and uncomfortable place; will you go in the parlor car with me, and show me which is Guy? I cannot go to sleep again to-night, and I don't believe you have closed your eyes at all, Miss Forbes," spoke the tender-hearted girl, wondering if the fever made Guy's head as hot as Mrs. Malony's the night she watched over her.

"There's no place for you to sit, my dear girl. Every berth and seat is occupied in that car. Either Mrs. W. or I should have staid in with him, if there had been any place for us."

"I can take in the lunch box and sit upon that near enough to the berth to bathe his head and give him drink. His lips must get parched and dry every few minutes."

"Well, I'll go in with you, if you can walk when the car is pitching at this rate, and then if he needs some one by him all the time you can stay. Where is your lunch box? you'd best get it before you start, so you needn't come back after it, if it's wanted."

Pansy overhauled the boxes and bags under their feet, belonging to half-a-dozen passengers and thrown down in a pile together, and at last produced the requisite lunch box, which was composed of tin, and in chest shape. When the speed of the train slackened a little, they started together for the sleeper and their fever patient.

Miss Forbes parted the heavy curtain, and looked in upon the sufferer.

"How do you feel, now, young man?" she asked, in a pitiful voice.

"I am very warm and thirsty, madam; but it is a great relief to lie down! Were it not for your kindness I should have been obliged to sit up all night. And you are denying yourself to give this to me. It is so kind of you!"

"Never mind that! I ain't very sleepy, and then I'm well. That makes a difference! I have brought little Pansey. I suppose you know she lives with your aunt. She wanted to come and sit by you, and mebbe bathe your head and give you drink if you wanted her to. She's brought their lunch box along to sit on. I guess she can tuck herself in behind the curtain, out of the way of passengers that pass along the aisle. Pansey, my girl, here's Mr. Guy Hurlbert," continued the talkative woman, breathlessly, by way of an informal introduction.

Pansey went up to the bedside, and put her soft little hand on his burning forehead. It was like the touch of magic, and Guy looked upon her as if an angel had suddenly dropped from the skies, and, as if some hidden string vibrated to the touch, his heart went out to her in tender affection.

"She is like her name," he murmured in a half whisper—"a genuine Pansey Blossom! Auntie has done well to secure such a prize. Are you not afraid to sit by me, lest you might take the fever, Pansey? I don't think you had better, if Miss Forbes thinks there is danger?"

"I am not afraid, Mr. Guy. The Lord has promised to take care of those who do what is right," she replied, with a resolute nod of her bright little head, as much as to say, "I shall not be sent away so easily."

The new and interesting face of his young nurse afforded him an agreeable diversion, and he partially forgot the shooting pains in his head and limbs, and the burning heat

and nausea which accompanies malarial fever. He watched the varied expression of her sweet face, and the graceful movements of her tapering fingers, every touch of which seemed like a caress, only to be convinced that she was not the waif that her appearance indicated when his aunt took her in for an errand girl, homeless and destitute from the streets of the great city. For Mrs. Withington had given the girl's history in her letters to her nephew, so far as she herself knew it.

She seemed to his bewildered and over-wrought brain now, as she sat there so calmly beside him, like a white plumed dove, with folded wings, glad to do her duty for the sick and suffering. His heart went out to her with an earnest longing to protect her from the snares and seductions to which poor and beautiful young girls are exposed in New York.

His brain became confused, now, with the memories which crowded upon it, all unbidden. Thoughts of his own young life in the old tenement ; and then the darting pains came back and pierced his head like arrows. He put his hand upon his head with heavy pressure, to still its wild throbbings, only to let it fall again, heavily, upon his hot, uncomfortable pillow. The soft, small hand of his nurse was again placed on his brow, which carried a refreshing coolness with its touch, and a sensation like the sipping of ambrosia to feverish lips.

But let us go back into the car where our other friends are keeping vigil, and see how they fare.

Mrs. Withington has fallen into a deep slumber ; for her over-taxed strength and nerves have literally given out and refused to do duty. Miss Forbes again peers out into the night. The air is so filled with fog from the Mississippi, and smoke from prairie fires, that no trace of the stars is visible. The hissing, panting locomotive leaps and plunges on ; its

glaring head-light penetrating the darkness, and winding the long train in and out over intricate curves, and upon frightful trestle works.

A sharp, quick whistle sounds the key-note of warning ! another, and another ! and then the weary sleepers spring to their feet, rubbing their eyes, and look around upon each other, white and terrified ; but stricken dumb ! A workman rushes through the car with a lantern, and pulls the bell rope with desperate haste. There is a man just around the curve swinging a torch.

A few rods beyond is a bridge on fire, and the train is plunging on to destruction. The speed slackens ! A sudden crash, and the two forward cars are flung from the track and thrown upon their sides. The passengers are pitched into one mass of struggling and groaning humanity.

The engine had struck the burning timbers with force enough to free the bolt which coupled it with the forward car, and it had plunged in the depth of the river, taking down the fireman and engineer in its fatal leap. The parlor cars, being in the rear, the sleeping passengers only received a terrible shock, without sustaining any injuries. But their fright was such that they were almost powerless to move. The smoking car was nearest the engine, and a greater portion of the men in that doomed car were either killed outright or fatally injured. Next to that were our unfortunate friends. Something over half of these victims were seriously or dangerously injured. Four only were killed, three escaped unharmed, and the remainder were slightly injured by bruises and broken bones. Among the latter named class were Mrs. Withington and Miss Forbes ; the former having her right leg broken just above the ankle, and the latter receiving several bruises and a broken wrist.

There is no need of describing this appalling scene. No

pen can do it justice ! But in the midst of it all, we find Pansey, trying with her small hands, and smaller strength, to lift the fallen victims from the places into which they were crushed ; some underneath seats, and amid piles of heavy valises, that had been flung upon them in the terrible shock. The lights had been extinguished, and the lamps shivered by the shock, cutting many of the poor creatures in the face, as they fell into fragments upon them.

Pansey could only grope her way amid the mass of injured and dying passengers, and try to discover her two friends by the sound of their voices ; but meanwhile she did what her hands found to do for the other victims. At last lights had been procured from outside, among the residents of the town, and physicians and sympathetic helpers came from far and near. As fast as the injured and dying could be taken away and cared for, it was done ; and many were the philanthropic passengers in the sleeping cars who gave up their berths for the poor, unfortunate sufferers. Guy was unable to move even before the accident occurred, and the frightful shock had made him still weaker. He knew nothing of the fate of his aunt or her friend, and he lay in an agony of suspense for Pansey's return. She had promised him she would let him know the moment she found them, and she was as good as her word.

They had been carried to the nearest house by a kind gentleman, who happened to be near when the persevering girl first discovered them. Her pale, anxious face, and superhuman efforts to raise them from the corner in which they were helplessly pushed, had attracted the gentleman's notice, and he went at once to their relief, and took them home in his carriage, which he had brought to the place of the disaster for that purpose. Such a scene of horror and distress levels humanity upon one common plane. The rich and the poor, the high and the low-born, were cared

for without partiality or distinction by these Samaritan-like town people.

An hour later and the rosy flush of daylight broke over the ghastly scene of the wrecked train, revealing hundreds of sufferers lying on cots and stretchers ; and still the good work of dressing wounds and setting broken bones went on.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOME AGAIN.

"It is time to take your medicine, now, Mr. Guy," spoke Pansey to her patient, after her own little doctor—as she called the city physician—had gone away.

Guy was fast improving, but still he needed the best of care. He seemed perfectly contented when the young girl was at his bedside, but still very solicitous for her health and comfort. He felt greatly troubled also, that he had no means to repay her for all this tender and self-sacrificing care. And then, too, it distressed him to think how much expense and trouble his aunt had been to in going to Western Kansas after him. The poor woman was lying in the next room, helpless with her broken ankle, and sore from bruises, as well as weakened by the dreadful shock. Pansey had both to nurse, with the assistance of Margaret, occasionally. But the work had to be done, and sickness makes a great deal of extra running as well as washing and ironing.

Miss Forbes was less injured, and after a few days' rest she had her arm bandaged and put in a sling, and often

came down to sit beside her dressmaker and friend, whom she had learned to respect and love like a near relative.

She was sitting beside the unfortunate woman on that morning, doing what she could for her with one hand, which, she had often said, was "more than some could accomplish with both hands."

"Now, Miss Forbes, I insist that you tell me how much you gave for the sleeping berth for poor Guy on that terrible night!" said Mrs. Withington, with a shudder.

"That is none of your concern; and you had better be thinking about your broken bones and your dressmaking business," replied her friend, curtly.

"I don't think broken bones are very pleasant subjects for contemplation; nor is dressmaking either, for that matter," replied the helpless woman. "But I know you paid a very high price for the favor, and I do not think it is right for you to assume such expense on my account."

"I didn't do it for you. It was for Guy Hurlbert. But I'm not sayin' that I wouldn't do the same thing for you, if you was as sick as he was, and crowded into such a hot and suffocatin' car as he was, that terrible night. It's always the way, the folks that are the least able to pay for broken bones are the one's to have 'em broken. That selfish old Major Dunn and his granddaughter escaped without a hair of their heads being injured. I don't dare to think what the consequence would have been if poor Guy had not been safe in the sleepin' car. I think 'twould have killed him outright. And then there's dear little Pansey. If her good heart hadn't prompted her to go in and sit by him to bathe his head, she might have been killed or crippled for life. It don't matter so much for an old maid like me, with most of life behind me, as for that young and beautiful creature. But it was wonderful that we escaped as easy as we did, Mrs. Withington. I

suppose the Lord's got somethin' more for us to do, and I hope I shall know what it is He wants of me."

"I think it is evident that you are doing something for his suffering children every day of your life, Miss Forbes. No deserving person calls upon you for help who does not get it, I am sure. I only wish my record was as good as yours has been in that respect. But there is one thing I have had to contend against to prevent my helping others more, and that is the lack of money. It is almost a crime to be poor in the eyes of the rich, and they blame you if you don't give as much for charitable institutions and church festivals as they do."

"Well, for my part, I don't care what they expect! We've all got to hand in our own accounts at last, and we are not to have but one judge, and no prejudiced jury, neither, thank the Lord! I guess now I'll go in and see how the young folks is gettin' along," and Miss Forbes coddled her splintered wrist, as if it had been a babe or a poodle dog, holding it tenderly in her well hand, and fluttered out of the room, leaving a lonely vacancy behind her, to the restless invalid.

"How are you feeling this afternoon, Mr. Guy? I hope you're strong enough to go out riding in the Park with Pansey and me. Don't you think you can, if we don't drive very fast? I'm sure 'twould do you a power of good," and she at length stopped long enough for him to reply.

"It would be a very pleasant luxury, and I am sure it could do me no harm; but I do not like to have you go to so much expense on my account, Miss Forbes;" replied the convalescing young man.

"I suppose I have the privilege of going to ride myself and asking who I please to go with me. You needn't flatter yourself that it's all on your account. Come, Pansey, child; go and dress yourself in your best frock and I'll stay

here and help Mr. Guy to get on his things. I shall want you to go out in the square and order the carriage after you get dressed."

"Do you think I had better go and leave Auntie alone, Miss Forbes? It is very kind of you to offer to take me with you, but I would not like to go under the circumstances."

"I'll attend to that; Margaret ain't very busy to-day, and she can stay with Mrs. W. if it's necessary for so short a time. Now go and do as I bid you."

Pansey glided lightly out of the room, and was soon back again dressed and ready to take her commission regarding what kind of a carriage to engage.

"Get the easiest and best barouche you can find there, and come around with it to show the driver the way," ordered the singular woman; and Pansey obeyed. Meanwhile Guy was rigged up in the best that could be selected out of his dilapidated clothing, and his shiny coat covered with a light afghan by the ingenious spinster.

When the carriage came, she called in the coachman to assist Guy into it, and after tucking the afghan snugly around him, putting Pansey beside her charge, and giving orders to the waiting driver just how fast to drive, and impressing it upon his thick head that he must remember he had an invalid inside, she motioned for him to drive away. Then she turned and entered the house, chuckling over her own sagacity in fooling Guy and Pansey as to her object in ordering the carriage.

But let us follow this bewildered pair on their fairy-like ride. Although Pansey's chariot was not manufactured out of a pumpkin, as was the mythical Cindrella's, it seemed almost as marvelous to her to be riding upon those soft cushions through the fragrant avenues of the Park, beside a young man who might have been her prince, were it not for

the fact that his clothes did not have the requisite English cut, and were somewhat the worse for wear. She had never ridden in Central Park before, and her emotional and romantic nature was keenly alive to the novel situation, while every minute seemed precious to her.

As for Guy, it was enough that the sweet, fresh air blew upon his pallid cheek, and that he had this gentle being beside him, whom he grew to love more and more each day, as she watched with patient zeal beside his couch. Viewing the situation from present appearances, there is some danger that Guy may commit the weakness of which his aunt reminded him in the old cottage at Hollywood, that of falling in love with some young girl and forgetting his grand aunt and two sisters.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN ENGAGEMENT.

Swish ! swish ! swish ! dashed the foaming waves against a ledge of boulders, and turned again seaward, breaking in long, frothy rolls. The wind was blowing from the eastward, and the salt air came laden with sweet scents from the surrounding islands. Across the bay, Sorrento lay steeped in the glories of a gorgeous sunset, which turned the water into ripples of gold. Snowy sails dotted the harbor, and tiny row-boats bounced over the waves, freighted with youth and beauty in bright flannel yachting suits and fluttering ribbons. A young couple sat upon a huge rock projecting over the water, and, as they supposed, secure from the impending assaults of the rising tide.

"Were you not dreadfully frightened, Queeny, when the crash came that night and you awakened out of a sound sleep?" asked the young man.

"Oh, yes! of course I was frightened; but none of us in the sleeping cars were injured. Just fancy what an escape it was, and how near papa and I came to being in the very car that was thrown from the track. We did not get the compartment until we were several miles out of Kansas City."

"What a night I should have spent had I known you were so near to danger, dearest Helen."

"Then, for your sake, I am glad you did not know about it, Jasper. But you came out to sketch, and if you don't go about it, you will lose the magnificence of this sunset!"

"I know, Queeny! but I had rather talk to you, now, and let my brush rest awhile."

"But I wan't you to paint, and you must do what I wish you to, else I shall not come out with you again when you invite me."

"You are hard to please, Queeny. If I had commenced to paint, you would have insisted that my first duty was to entertain you. Is not that the truth, Helen?"

"Possibly; but that makes no difference. My wishes ought to be your law, Jasper."

"You mean your law ought to be my wishes, Queeny."

"As you please. My phraseology never did suit you since my remembrance; but now I expect to be obeyed," she answered with an imperious gesture of her bejewelled hand.

"I did not get very far beyond your title when I christened you Queenie. But Victoria is less arbitrary with her subjects, I fancy."

"This is all foolish nonsense, Jasper. I came out here

with you on purpose to watch you sketch this gorgeous sunset scene around the shores of Frenchman's Bay."

"Is that all? I flattered myself that you came to keep me company, and allow me to tell you what is in my heart, now that I am twenty-one and my own master. There is no necessity for me to keep silence longer. I had not the right to ask you to be mine forever one month ago, because I was under guardianship, and could not ask Mr. Dunn to give you to me if you consented. And yet our union has seemed a settled fact to me for years. I know no other real love, except for my mother."

"Except for your mother! I hope you do not put the love you should give to your—your—wife, on a par with that you give your mother, Jasper!"

"It is altogether of another nature; but you must know *how* I have loved you all the years of our childhood, and now that I have arrived to manhood, it is only stronger; and you have given me to understand that this feeling is reciprocated." At this juncture he endeavors to imprison her soft white hand, which she coquettishly evades, saying:

"Yes; but a young lady has the right to change her mind, you see."

"I see nothing of the sort; but if that is true, has not a gentleman the same privilege?"

"I suppose so; that is if he does not mind a breach of promise case."

"There, Queenie; don't be sarcastic. I despise a sarcastic woman."

"I am *not* a woman, Jasper," she answered hotly, and with flushed face.

"Pray what may I call you then?"

"A young lady, sir; if you please!"

"Ah, well! as you like it!"

"Then commence your sketch of yonder mainland," pointing toward the rosy shores of Sorrento.

"But Helen, dear, we are no longer boy and girl, playing with tops and dolls, and why can we not talk of our love for each other, and hopes for the future, here, in this romantic spot, where even the air is laden with sentiment, and the wild birds converse together in their language of love?"

The young lady curled her lip a trifle scornfully, and a look of triumph shone in her lustrous eyes. She had been expecting this confession from Jasper for months, and had divined that it was for this purpose he had invited her to go out upon this rock with him alone. He had a little glittering bauble in his pocket, hidden away amid the velvet cushions of a tiny jewel case, which she had all the while intended to let him slip upon her engagement finger. It was a costly trifle, for which he had paid a fabulous sum at Niferty & Co's.

He turned and gazed for a moment into her fresh, handsome face, which was half averted, and flushed with an emotion he could scarcely understand.

"Oh, dearest Helen, why will you not listen to my pleading, and consent to be mine, now. Life is nothing to me without your love to brighten it, *Queenly*. Oh, if I could but make you understand!"

"I know, Jasper, all this is very romantic, but I may see some one later whom I shall love better, and so may you! You are only a boy, yet, you know!"

This speech raised his ire, and he flushed crimson, and replied hotly:

"If I am a boy at twenty-one, what is that stripling in the banking-house, whom you think quite old enough to flirt with, although but nineteen?"

This was a poser; but it was not a conundrum hard

enough to disconcert the young lady. Her answer came promptly :

“ A flirtation and an engagement are different, you see.”

“ Ah, yes ! but how would you relish the return of such a compliment, Helen ?”

“ I should not relish it at all. It could not be considered a parallel case. A jilted young lady stands a poor chance of finding another suitor. A young man does not have the same difficulty. He can find another whenever he sets himself about it in earnest.”

“ So, then you think a young man can pick up his rejected heart and pass it around among his lady friends till he happens to hit upon one who will accept it ? That may be logic ; but I prefer not to dispose of mine in that way. I would remain a bachelor all my life, sooner than marry where I do not love.”

Now, the impetuous youth believed this boyish fancy, or infatuation for the girl with whom he had played in childhood, was true love. She had become part of his daily life, and it never occurred to him that when he was older, or if he had opportunity of making the acquaintance of others, a deeper passion might be his. Certain it was that the girl by his side had not the nature to inspire his best or truest emotions. She could tyrannize and queen it over him, it is true, and he had learned to look upon her as a person to be obeyed and humored in all her caprices. But her shallow and exacting nature could inspire nothing broader or deeper, or higher. This he learned later ; and then he repented with tears and prayers, and nights of agony and almost despair. But he was granted his heart's desire now, or what he mistook for his heart's desire.

As for Helen, she was too much like her grandfather to be capable of loving unselfishly. She was very much like

the dog in the manger. She could not endure to see Jasper paying any other young lady attention, and she would have hated any one whom she thought could outrival her in his love and devotion. She wanted the privilege of playing with him, and then, if it suited her caprice, throw him away, crippled and hopelessly crushed at heart.

But Jasper would have no difficulty in gaining the consent of Major Dunn for this much coveted prize. The match between Helen and Jasper was one of the old gentleman's approval. He was aware that the young lady might do much worse. Then, Jasper's habits were good, and he was financially a prize in the matrimonial market. This was of paramount consideration in the mind of his step-father. He could even forgive Jasper's artistic proclivities, so long as he had fallen heir to half-a-million dollars. Money to Major Dunn was a great soothing syrup. It overruled all petty prejudices, and, in his estimation, elevated its possessors to heroes.

But let us return to the embryo lovers, sitting upon the rock, all heedless of the rising tide. The wind continued to increase, and the foaming waves dashed in wild fury upon the very rock where Helen and Jasper sat. The young man had been compelled to take up his brush and sketch sunset at Sorrento to please his tyrannizing queen, and await her behest for an answer to his all important question. Let us look over his shoulder and see if we can determine what are his prospects for future fame as an artist. He had forgotten everything but the scene he was portraying upon his sketch-book. The young lady, the incoming tide, and their perilous position were lost in oblivion. True, his tyrant—his queen as he is wont to call her,—had driven him to take up the brush; but yet he was deaf to her chatter, and moved his pencil with the rapidity of an expert over the blank surface of his sketch-

book. Every line and curve showed rare genius in this amateur.

But alas ! for the inconsistencies of frail humanity. Helen got angry and grew envious of the gorgeous scene which caused Jasper to be deaf to her prattle, and at length she turned to him with an injured air and tremulous voice, saying :

“Jasper, why do you sit there as if you were dumb, without paying the least heed to me, after you dragged me out here to sit upon this hard rock to keep you company ? I will not be snubbed in this manner for that old sketch-book !” and she snatched it from his hands, and flung it down, as she supposed, among the rocks at their feet. But, alas ! no ! it went floating out upon the restless tide. She clutched her dazed companion’s arm convulsively, white with terror, and shrieked :

“Oh, horrors ! Jasper ! The tide is in, and we are surrounded by water, and helpless ! For heaven’s sake do something to save us from those mad, surging waves !

By this time the young man came to his senses sufficiently to realize their dangerous position. He had made a mistake as to the time of flood tide, and supposed that it was going out instead of coming in, when he took his foster-sister out upon that favorite seat.

Many lovers had plighted their troth upon that very rock. It has been often said, that there is something in the air at this part of Mt. Desert Island which inspires the divine passion. Lovers wandered everywhere around that wild and rugged coast, and this was by no means the first pair who had been taken from that rock by some friendly boatman, because they found themselves surrounded by the treacherous tide, and were powerless to save themselves.

Each minute increased their danger ; for at flood tide this ledge was entirely submerged ; and when the wind

blew from the east, the waves beat furiously around its rugged sides. Their only hope was to signal a boat; for although Jasper was an expert swimmer, it was too far to drag a wet burden like Helen with him; but even without such encumbrance, he could not have fought those fierce waves such a distance, and come off victor.

“Oh, Jasper, dearest, save yourself and me, if you can! Oh, I cannot bear the thought of being plunged into those mad waves! But see, Jasper, they dash higher and higher every minute, and the wind is blowing a dreadful gale. Oh, what shall we do? Jasper, I will promise you what you asked a little while ago, if you will only save me from this terrible danger.”

He clasped her in his arms, drew the ring from his pocket, kissed it, and then slipped it upon her willing finger. “There, darling! if we die together, we are engaged; and if we are saved together, it will be the same; will it not, Helen?”

“Oh, yes, if you wish it so, Jasper; but we must be *saved* together! not lost! oh, not lost!”

Jasper looked seaward, and could discern nothing but the boiling, seething, hissing waves. He turned shoreward. It seemed miles away, and between them and it a great gulf was surging. He looked below; and it not only seemed that the water was rising with tremendous force, but it appeared as if the ledge itself was sinking to meet it. The cold tongues were already lapping their feet, and the breaking waves hissed at them, and dashed over them with merciless fury. It was growing darker each minute, too; for the sun had wrapped himself in a purple shroud, and gone to awaken the song of birds in another part of the world.

Every wave now broke over them, as they sat powerless and helpless, glaring at each other in stony silence; for even speech seemed paralyzed,

Suddenly, a monstrous wave came with tremendous force, towering above their heads, and broke over the topmost pinnacle of the ledge, with a crash like thunder, and rolling seaward, left them drenched to the skin. This aroused Jasper from his lethargy of stony muteness, and he climbed to the top of the rock and shouted with desperation in every call for help.

Helen sat paralyzed, as if turned to stone, straining her ears and eyes to catch the first glimpse or sound of a response to Jasper's calls. Another mountain wave broke over their heads, and after it had receded, left the water nearly up to their heads. As soon as Jasper could recover his breath from the dashing wave which had nearly thrown them from the rock, he again used all his strength shouting for help.

"What was that? I hear a faint sound in the distance! Jasper! Jasper! it is help! life! Oh, Jasper! do you hear? It comes nearer and louder each time; it is a woman's voice, don't you hear it? Shout now to the top of your voice. There! it is nearer. Listen! Shout once more! It is mamma in a boat, rowing alone. She is nearing the rock! another minute and she will be here to save us! Hold on, Jasper! Take my hand! don't let me fall into the waves! Jasper, do you hear?"

Another tremendous breaker came and swept them from their strong and convulsive hold upon the sharp edges of the pinnacle, and they were borne upon the very wave which seemed destined to destroy them, safe within the reach of the life-boat, in which Jasper's mother plied the oars skilfully and alone, nerved by the superhuman power that comes to mortals when their loved ones hang in the balance between life and death, and the former depends upon the success of their movements.

A few minutes later, and the little boat was braced

against the top of the rock, which was just visible after the breaker had rolled back, and the dripping forms of Helen and Jasper were drawn into its friendly shelter. Another heavy breaker dashed upon the rock, burying it from sight, beneath the surging, seething waters.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GLAD SURPRISE.

It is cold and cheerless November again. Mrs. Withington has fully recovered from her late injuries, and is driven with work until late into the night. Even with the assistance of two more seamstresses, she has to be on deck constantly herself. Although Pansey is in school during the day, she takes home nearly all the garments the dress-maker is obliged to deliver, either before or after school hours. Beside this service, she makes herself useful in many ways about the workroom; for she is never idle a moment, and never seems to expect leisure for the youthful pleasures that others of her years so covet.

Miss Forbes has secured the patronage of Mrs. Dunn and Helen, and the latter is making elaborate preparations for a season of unusual gayety. It has been rumored that the Vanderwaters will give a grand reception and ball later on. This announcement is sufficient to set all upper-tendom into a whirl of excitement, from the fact that the affair was gotten up in honor of a certain English peer, who was soon to arrive in America, and whose visit to New York would give fresh impetus to the gay season.

Guy has so far regained his health as to be uneasy in

idleness, and he has again determined to try his success in searching for a position in a banking-house. His aunt declares that she has tried to make a lawyer, author, doctor or clergyman of him in vain, and that she shall waste no more breath upon that subject. He had been out all day going his rounds of inquiry, and had returned just as Mrs. Withington was lighting the gas in the hall.

“Well, Guy; what success to-day? I hope it has not been another fruitless search, my boy!”

“I have almost begun to think that I am one too many in the world, dear Auntie. There don’t seem to be any place provided for me to work in, at all events. Maybe I was intended for a gentleman of leisure, or to be an object of charity for my poor, over-worked Aunt to support. But I shall not stay around here doing nothing very long. If I do not find what I am looking for before many days, I shall take an engagement to drive a coal cart or truck team,” and the young man followed his aunt into the work-room, where Pansey was picking the basting threads out of a costume which she was to take to Helen Dunn as soon as it could be finished.

“There, Pansey, see if you can get this discouraged young man in a better mood by dinner-time. If there is no other way give him a dose of soothing syrup,” and Mrs. Withington took the dress from Pansey’s hands and asked her to go and lay the dinner table, as it was Margaret’s afternoon out and she would only be home in time to serve the dinner.

“Oh, Mr. Guy, have you got the horror’s to-night? That is what Miss Forbes calls it when she has the blues. But perhaps I can give you something that will make you smile. I have been keeping a letter which the postman brought an hour ago till you came home. There may be good news inside. It is from the banking-house of Dunn

& Fairweather. Now ain't you glad you have fallen into my hands to be treated?"

"Yes, Pansey; you are a good child, and I am very thankful for your interest in my welfare. But, where is the letter?"

"I have a good mind now, not to give it to you directly. The idea of calling me—a young lady past fourteen—a child!" and she puckered her rosebud lips in mock resentment, and passed him the letter which he so impatiently waited to receive.

"I beg your pardon, M'lle Pansey! I will remember, hereafter, that I am not to call you child;" and he eagerly seized the letter, and tore open the large envelope, hurriedly running over its important contents.

A smile stole over his face, which a few moments before seemed so perplexed and serious that his aunt thought he looked ten years older than he ought at his age. He folded it, replaced it in the envelope and passed it to Mrs. W. Pansey was looking on with great, eager eyes, ready to congratulate him, if it contained good news.

"Read it aloud, Auntie, so Pansey can hear it; (for they had followed the happy girl into the dining-room, where she had commenced to set the table for dinner) and Mrs. Withington had thrown Helen's dress upon the sofa and opened the letter.

She read as follows :

MR. GUY HURLBERT :

About a year ago you called at this house and applied for a position, leaving your name and address with me. I told you then that if anything occurred that there was a vacancy in any way desirable, I would let you know. My partner, Major Dunn, has gone to Europe on business, and the assistant cashier has since died. The vacancy has to

be filled at once, and I prefer to put you in his place instead of advancing the young man to that position who is next to him in business rank. Please call at once, and inquire for me, unless you already have a position that suits you, and oblige,

ROBERT FAIRWEATHER.

“ Well, Guy ! are you still of the opinion that you are one too many in the world ? I should think that this was proof positive that there is a place left for you a while longer. Now cheer up, and make your poor old aunt happy by hearing your ringing laugh once more before she dies.”

“ Why, my dear, blessed Auntie, I hope you will hear me laugh a great many times before that terrible thing happens !” and he threw his manly arms around her, and hugged her so tightly that she was forced to beg for mercy, lest she should not escape without broken bones.

Pansey looked on, as happy as if she owned her share in Guy’s good luck and the bear-like embrace, both of which were in store for her a few years later.

“ It will not do to be too hopeful about this offered position. When Major Dunn returns from abroad he may discharge me. It is his province to employ the clerks at this house ; Mr. Fairweather is only acting in his place until his return. Sometimes one’s hopes are the highest and brightest when they are nearest the precipice which dashes them to atoms.”

“ Well, well, Guy ; don’t let us jump from the precipice till we come to it ; and I hope it is so far away that we shall not reach it for many years in the future. Here comes Margaret, and Miss Forbes close behind her, upon my word ! Well, she will be delighted to hear of your good fortune for one ; of that I am sure, Guy.”

Miss Forbes entered the house with her usual flutter and bluster, and rapped upon the workroom door. Pansey put down the dessert plates she had just taken from the closet shelf, and bounded out to welcome her.

"There is no one in the sewing room, just now, Miss Forbes. Mr. Guy and Auntie are in the dining-room. Will you come in with us?"

She followed Pansey's lead, and was very quick to notice that something unusual had happened, by the excited greeting of the dressmaker, and Guy's pleased expression.

"How do you all do? I come down here a purpose to talk with Mr. Guy about a horse I've just bought, but I guess I've come to the wrong place to get a hearin' just now. You've had some interestin' news I take it, Mrs. Withington?" and the spinster glanced toward the open letter, which the dressmaker had read for the third time, to make sure that its contents had been fully understood.

"Yes, Miss Forbes. I was saying as you came in that you would rejoice in my nephew's good fortune. He has just had a position offered him at Dunn & Fairweather's banking-house."

The spinster fluttered over to where Guy was sitting, giving him both her hands by way of congratulation, exclaiming:

"Your fortune's made now, for sure, young man."

"Ah, but I am not so sure of that, Miss Forbes. It was Mr. Fairweather who sent for me, and when Major Dunn returns from abroad he may have some one else in view. It is his province to employ the clerks."

"Mr. Fairweather's got a handsome daughter, and who knows but there'll be a match between you and she? stranger things than that have happened!" said Miss Forbes, reflectively, as if addressing herself instead of Guy.

"That is not very probable, my good friend. Banker's daughters do not fall in love with poor young men, except in novels."

"That is a very safe way to view the subject, my boy; but in my experience real life is far more dramatic and unreasonable than writers of fiction picture it;" put in his aunt, noting her nephew's matter of fact answer to Miss Forbes' wild suggestion.

"What were you saying about buying a horse, when you first came in Miss Forbes. You seem to have forgotten what you said you came down for;" and Guy took a seat beside his much respected friend.

"Oh, yes; your good news drove horses and everything else out of my head. But now you remind me of it, I did come down a purpose to tell you that I'd invested in a real live horse. He ain't very handsome; that is, leavin' his tail out. He has got a lovely tail, and no mistake about it. But I didn't buy him on account of his beauty, that anybody could see that looked at him."

"Pray tell us all about it, Miss Forbes. I am getting curious to know why you should make such a singular investment," said Guy, drawing his chair nearer to his friend.

"Well!" began the spinster, "there was an apple and cabbage vender on our street yesterday, and when he got opposite our house I noticed his horse was so lame that it could hardly walk. He had a stout whip, and he was beatin' that poor beast with the handle. I sot there at my winder jest as long as I could, and then I started down stairs and went straight out and told him what I thought of him. He looked a little shamed it's true; but he said he didn't consider it none of my business; that that horse was his own property, and he had the right to pound it all he had a mind to. I see that t'was no use to argue with him, and then I asked him if he wanted to sell the

horse. He said if there was any way to get his cart back to Jersey, and he got his price for the animal, he'd sell him. I told him I liked apples and I'd buy them too, at wholesale price. But he said the cart and cabbages would have to be taken home, any way. So I told him he could go home with his cart, and if he would take a fair price for the horse, I'd buy it this morning, if he'd bring it back to me. Says he, 'I'll take seventy-five dollars for that horse, and he'll get all over his lameness in a couple of months.' The horse looked up at me, kind of pitiful like, and acted as if he knew I was his friend. I went around and put my hand on his nose, and he laid his poor head down on my shoulder, and I tell you it was more than I could stand. I told him to bring the animal to me this morning, and I'd pay him the seventy-five dollars. And sure enough, he came around bright and early this morning leading the horse. I've had him taken to a stable, and told the hostler to give him all he could eat and take the best of care of him. The man looked up at me as if he thought I was crazy, and asked me if it wan't a sassy question, he'd like to know where I bought the horse, and how much I paid for him. I told him, and you should have seen him open his eyes. He said it wasn't worth wintering, and that the lame leg would grow worse all the time instead of better. But there's one thing about it, that wretch of a man never'll get a chance to beat the poor animal again!" and the tender-hearted spinster actually brushed away a tear as she stopped to take breath.

"It would have been better for you to have gone to the society with a long name and complained of the man. He could have been arrested for cruelty to dumb beasts, and the horse would have been taken away from him. It is a shame for the man to receive a prize for such brutal treat-

ment to his horse. But you did it in good faith, I know ; thinking buying it the only alternative."

"I did know all about that society you speak of ; but by the time I could have gone down there and back again the man might have been in Jericho, or some place else out of reach. Huntin' up these societies that are organized to look after dumb beasts, is just about like sendin' starvin' folks to so-called charitable institutions. They'd die before anything could be done for them. If I'd sent Pansey there, when I found her on the street that cold mornin', instead of fetchin' her here to your aunt, I'm sure I don't know what would have become of the poor girl. There's plenty of room for them that commit crime ; but good honest folks don't stand any kind of a chance in these great cities, if they're poor and helpless." *True, too true*

"We are very thankful, Miss Forbes, that you did not send our little Pansey to a charitable institution on that day. She is the light of the house, and we should not know how to get along without her, now that we know her worth and gentle ministrations when either of us are ill or disheartened," spoke Guy, casting an affectionate glance toward the now blushing Pansey, who was struggling with the obstinate basting threads with nervous haste, since she knew that the costume was to be taken to Helen Dunn, as soon as dinner was over.

Miss Forbes had been invited to share this unpretentious meal with them, as she frequently had of late.

It did not require much urging from the hostess, for it always seemed like home to the lonely spinster in the companionship of John Hurlbert's aunt and nephew. Pansey had slipped upstairs to her small nest of a room, and changed her gown, in readiness to start on her mission of delivering the costume, as soon as dinner was over. She was delighted that Miss Forbes had decided to remain and

dine with them, because she would accompany her in the car as far as she went ; and although Pansey was a brave girl, and seldom knew what it was to be afraid while doing her duty after dark, any more than in the daylight, it was far more pleasant to have good company on her lonely car ride. This was the first time she had been sent to Major Dunn's house ; for this was a trial costume of the dress-maker's. If it suited her customer, Mrs. Withington was to be engaged as her regular modiste in the future. Sometimes the destiny of a lifetime hangs upon just such a brittle thread.

And now that their dinner is over, and Miss Forbes has said "good night" for the fifth time, let us follow our little heroine to the Dunn residence. She was accompanied by her spinster friend to the door, and then she walked briskly up the steps, and pulled the brightly polished bell-knob. It was opened by a colored porter, who gave a profound bow, with rather a mysterious air, and asked her business. She had set the cumbersome box down to one side of the step, and raising it in her frail arms, put her taper fingers through the string with which it was fastened.

"I have brought home the young lady's dress ; please can I see Mrs. Dunn or Miss Helen ?"

"You can wait in that chair till I see where you are to take it, miss," said the sable porter, pointing with a dignified air to the large, black walnut chair in the hallway.

Pansey dropped down in the chair, and sat staring at the reflection of herself in the long pier mirror on the opposite side of the wall. She made a beautiful picture, all unconscious as she was, of her own attractive sweetness. Just at that moment the street door was opened, and a tall, handsome young man entered. He stopped suddenly, gazing first at the reflection in the mirror, and then at the timid and blushing maiden sitting beside the ponderous

packing box. His heart gave a threatening leap, and then seemed almost to cease beating. He removed his hat and stood before her with wondering eyes, as if she was some mythical being dropped there by the fairies. And still he stood gazing without attempting to address her. At length the awkwardness of the situation dawned upon Pansey, and she timidly explained, blushing like a damask rose, that she was an errand girl who had brought home Miss Dunn's dress. The musical voice was in harmony with the sweet, classic face, and as she folded her small white hands across her lap, and sat there as composedly as a princess after those few words of explanation, Jasper thought—for it was he who came so abruptly upon the waiting girl—he had never seen such a picture before. Every line and curve of her girlish face, every turn of her dainty head, and every movement of her restless, tapering fingers, were indelibly written upon his active brain; and yet he spoke never a word. Pansey began to fidget in her chair a little, now, and wonder why the ebony porter did not return with his message from one of the ladies.

“Have you been waiting long? It was not very polite in the porter to leave you here in the hall; he should have shown you in the reception room!” spoke Jasper, at length, longing once again to hear the sound of that musical voice, and see the sweet lips part in speech, revealing those two rows of pearls.

“Yes, sir. I have waited nearly or quite ten minutes; but perhaps the porter could not find the ladies directly.” This with a vivid blush, and a “smile, made all of sweet accord,” like Abo Ben Adim's angel.

Suddenly the young man's countenance changed, and as if a heavy blow was struck at his heart's core, he touched his hat to the young girl, and staggered up the stairs, saying he would “see if he could find his mother or

Miss Helen." But on the way he met the porter coming down with the message.

"Did you leave that young girl in the hall to await for your return, George?"

"Yes, sah. I did, sah."

"Well, then it is time you had learned better manners. You should have shown her in the reception room. See that you do not commit such a blunder again. It is disgraceful!"

"Yes, sah. I'll remember next time," and he hurried on down to where Pansey sat like Patience on a monument waiting for him.

"The young lady says you are to bring the box to her room, miss."

Pansey again picked up her bundle, and commenced to mount the softly carpeted stairs; the sable waiter leading the way.

Jasper lingered in the hallway, loathe to lose sight of this bright vision, which, after all, was nothing but his betrothed's dressmaker's errand girl. It hurt him to see her carrying that cumbersome box, while the porter went up the stairs empty handed, as well as empty headed. He turned around to him, and administered another rebuke, saying:

"George, why don't you take that box and bring it up for her? you ought to be ashamed to let her carry such a large box up stairs, when you have nothing in your useless hands."

George began to wonder at so much reproof from Jasper. It was something new. He had never been in the habit of finding fault with the servants. Although the porter's head was too thick to define the real cause of this fitful outburst of reproof, he could not help connecting it,

in some way, with the errand girl he was conducting to Miss Helen's room.

But now they were at the door, and after a double knock upon it from George's fist, Pansey was admitted, and he handed her the box he had taken from her at Jasper's command.

Instead of going directly to his mother's room, as was Jasper's habit when he came home from business, he sought the seclusion of his own room; dropping down in the nearest chair, and staring at nothing in particular, as if suddenly bereft of his mind.

Mrs. Dunn was in Helen's room when Pansey bustled in with her immense box, and at sight of her fresh young face, so sweet and guileless, she gave a sudden start of surprise and admiration. She thought, too, that there seemed to be a strange familiarity in that beautiful face. But she could not understand what it was, and so she greeted the shy girl with the question: "Are you from Mrs. Withington's, my girl?"

"Yes, madam! I am her errand girl, and she wished me to stay till the young lady had tried on the dress to see if she was suited," and Pansey stood, waiting for a reply.

"If you will send the girl out, mamma, I will try it on now. I am anxious to see what it is like," and Helen cast a patronizing glance at the anxious Pansey's auburn hair and bright, round eyes.

"I will take you in my room, and you can wait there till Miss Helen is ready to tell you how it suits," said the bustling little woman. "What is your name my girl? we shall want something to call you, if we are to have you deliver our packages this winter."

"Pansey, please, is what I am called at home."

"That is a very pretty name, and very appropriate for you, too. Are your parents living, Pansey?"

“No, madam ! not that I know of ! but I have a very nice home with Mrs. Withington, and she allows me to call her Auntie. I go to school and am in the grammar department. I do the errands after school hours.”

Here a rap came on the door, and when Pansey looked up, on the entrance of the new comer, she was face to face with Jasper again. He could not stay anywhere long to-night ; and he began to hate himself for this strange new impulse which filled his entire being. He said over and over again, mentally, “What a treacherous wretch I am ! Engaged to one young lady, and unable to banish the face, or cease to hear the voice of another, and strange one. And not a young lady, either ! Only an errand girl, to bring my Helen’s costumes to her.”

His mother noticed the strange new light in her son’s eyes, as he turned them upon Pansey ; and not being aware that they had met before, she said :

“My son, this is little Pansey ; our dressmaker’s errand girl.”

“Little Pansey !” How that poetic name rang through his ears. It seemed in perfect rythm with her angelic face and pure, sweet voice. “Little Pansey ! Heaven help me to bear my fate ! Why was this siren sent here for me to see ? Little Pansey ! Heaven help me !” were his all-absorbing thoughts, formed into a prayer.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GUY'S NEW POSITION.

Early the next morning Guy started, with his Aunt's and Pansey's blessing, for the banking-house of Dunn & Fairweather. Notwithstanding the mercury had fallen several degrees since last night, his spirits had arisen higher than they had been for years before. It had hitherto been his custom to walk down town from his aunt's house. This morning, however, he took a stage for a more speedy transit than his legs would afford him.

After being hindered by several blockades, which stops seemed to him three times as long as they really were, he found himself opposite the banking-house in question. He pulled the strap and jumped hurriedly from the stage, ran up the broad stone steps, and was soon ushered into the presence of Mr. Fairweather. How carelessly, and thoughtlessly we oftentimes walk toward our destiny ; and how a step backward, or forward, the delay of a moment, or a premature advent, may seal our fate for life ; and still we rush madly on, in spite of all these intricate, inner workings of life's strange machinery, without stopping to consider what the consequences will be.

Mr. Fairweather looked up from his desk to which he had just sat down when our hero entered his office, and noticed the well-knit proportions of the young man's frame, scarcely recognizing him as the one who applied for a position more than a year before.

" My name is Guy Hurlbert, sir. I came in answer to

a letter from you, which I received last night, after business hours."

"Oh yes! I remember now! Sit down, please! I will be at liberty to talk with you presently;" and he turned again to his desk, and opened letter after letter, some of which went into the waste basket, and others were placed on the file. At last the envelopes had all been opened, and taking up those letters which were to be answered at once, he left the room, and carried them to the clerk of correspondence.

He came back, and again seated himself at the desk, looking somewhat perplexed and puzzled. Guy watched every movement of his face with intense anxiety. What if he had changed his mind after all, and decided not to employ him? He thought it would be more than he could bear, after such an elevation of his hopes.

The silence seemed oppressive now, to Guy, and he attempted to break it by making some trivial remark of the most commonplace character. But his utterance seemed to be choked by a great lump in his throat, and he sat still in silence, waiting for something to happen; anything that would break the spell, and relieve him from his suspense, which was getting almost intolerable.

Mr. Fairweather cleared his throat, and began:

"I am at a loss to know exactly how to manage this case, Mr. Hurlbert. It is more of a complicated one than you suppose."

Guy stared at him blankly; but ventured no remark. The banker paused a moment, and then went on:

"Have you a middle name, Mr. Hurlbert?"

"I have, sir. It is Rumford! My great-grandfather was the Earl of Rumford, and I was christened for him. But titles are not of much account in America," returned Guy.

“For a reason, which I cannot now explain, it will not do for you to go by the name of Hurlbert. Sometime I may be at liberty, and think it best, to tell my reasons. Now, if you have no objections, and for the sake of taking this position, which is the best you could find under any circumstances in a new business, we will call you Guy Rumford. What are your feelings in regard to it, young man?”

“It is not a very pleasant thing to go under a false name, or to conceal part of one's real name, to which there is no stigma attached except poverty,” replied Guy, in brave defense of the Hurlbert name. “But, if the fact of my father's death amid poverty has come up to stand between me and a place in which to earn my daily bread, I suppose I must lay that name aside for awhile, however it may grate upon my manhood, or however much it may appear to reflect upon my dead father's good name.”

There was a great sob in his voice as he ended; for he supposed that by some means Mr. Fairweather had learned his parent's history, and that their life and sorrowful death in that miserable tenement, was why the banker wished him to change his name, before he would promise to take him as clerk in their house.

Mr. Fairweather fumbled among the papers upon his desk and waited for the much-agitated Guy to answer, who at length arose and paced the floor, mentally calling upon Almighty wisdom to direct him aright in this hour of doubt and indecision.

The banker watched him with a feeling of respect in his heart for this manifestation of paternal reverence. For he well knew by the young man's manner what a severe struggle it was between honoring his dead parents and the loss of what he had been trying for three years to secure.

“It seems like selling my birthright for a mess of pot-

tage, sir ! with all due respect to you for giving me the position with what seems so slight a sacrifice on my part," spoke Guy at length.

" Well, if you feel as if you would like to consider it and advise with your aunt—I think you told me a year ago that you lived with an aunt—I will wait until to-morrow for your decision," replied the banker.

Thus reminded of his aunt, and her advice, his mind suddenly changed. He thought if he consulted her, she would only be too glad of this change of name for an excuse to send him back to college, and it would be folly to let this long sought opportunity pass him. What was his name, after all, compared to the consummation of his one fond hope in business life ? It weighed as a mere feather in the balance to him now.

He sat down once more beside the man who would do all in his power to befriend him.

" I have decided to accept the position on your terms, sir. I hope I shall not have reason to regret this seemingly disloyal course ; that is, disloyal to my dead father's memory.

" I do not think you will ever regret your choice, young man. Nor do I consider it in the light of a disloyal act, by any means. It is an unavoidable compromise. A choice out of two evils, which I believe beyond a doubt, you will eventually find to be the least."

Guy felt greatly relieved after it was all settled, and as he called himself over and over again by his new name, he began to think he was almost a stranger to himself.

" Shall I commence upon my duties at once, sir ; or have you made other arrangements for to-day at my desk ?"

" It is ready at any time you desire to commence, Mr. Rumford !" and he led the way to the cashier's depart-

ment, and after a few words of explanation to the cashier, he left them to arrange their business duties between themselves.

Fortunately, this cashier was an honorable business man, and he treated Guy with great kindness and consideration. And the young man strained every nerve to understand and remember the instructions given him. Although busily engaged every minute of that forenoon, it seemed an almost endless one to our hero.

At noon he went out to a restaurant, near by, and took a cup of coffee and a sandwich ; but he was so much absorbed in the books he had left behind in the office that he did not relish this hasty bite. He was soon at his post again, and hard at work.

But let us leave him for a while, and look into the next office to see what Jasper, the young amateur artist, has been busy about, while the other clerks were out lunching. It was only the rough sketch of a young errand girl made from memory the night before. But he was as thoroughly versed in his subject as if it were directly before him. Every curve of the classic features, the unstudied pose of the dainty head, the luminous, pathetic eyes, the dimpled cheeks, over which a soft blush stole, as upon the heart of a white rose, or the bursting bud of a pond lily ; the parted lips, revealing a glimpse of those glossy pearls. All these charms are represented in this revelation of art, inspired by that divine passion which has hitherto been slumbering in the young artist's breast. And yet, while he works over this new and absorbing study, he feels like a culprit and a guilty creature, for indulging in the delightful reverie this face inspires. He controls his emotions as best he can, and works over this sketch as if he fain would make himself credit the delusion that it was for love of art alone that he drew the brush

over the golden brown hair, and then gazed upon it to note the effect of each new touch. Before this divine creature the face of Helen faded into oblivion. He tried to arouse himself from this delicious dream, and force his thoughts back into their former channels. But he might as well have attempted to turn the Mississippi again to its source. He had now learned to consider expression—reproduced upon canvas—the soul of art. Hitherto his portrait sketching had been centered upon the representations of perfectly moulded features, like Helen's. Now he began to see his deficiency in true artistic genius. It taught him a new phase in art life, as well as real life, and he compared finely moulded features to the artistic chiselling upon a diamond; while expression, such as the original of his sketch possessed, was like the color and glow which scintillated in the depths of the gem, as pulses on fire.

He laid aside his brush, and put away the study carefully in his desk drawer, when it was time to commence business again, and he had not tasted of food that day since breakfast. He had worked over the sketch all the time usually spent in lunching at the restaurant. But he had no appetite, and so he did not go out at all. He went in to speak to the cashier for a few minutes, and there found the new assistant hard at work over his books. He started a little, at first sight of him, and then remembered that it was the same face that greeted him more than a year since; and yet, it seemed that the familiarity of features and expression dated farther back than that.

But first days at a new business come to an end at last, as all days must; and to Guy the hour of five o'clock came as a welcome relief. He had worked harder to accomplish a little, than he did in after months and years to do great things in his line of commercial life. But he did not mind the work, if he only suited his employers. To fail now,

after finding a chance to do the business he so much desired, would be a terrible mortification to his sensitive and proud nature.

He closed his books, turned out the gas at his desk, and went to the hat and coat room to equip himself for a cold ride in the stage. Mr. Fairweather was in there for the same purpose; for he did not leave the banking-house earlier than his clerks, and oftentimes he was the last one to quit the building.

He had a kind word of encouragement for his new clerk, nor did he fail to note Guy's dazed look, and the tired expression of his full, gray eyes.

"You will not find the work so hard to-morrow," he said kindly. "It will grow less tiresome after a better acquaintance with your duties."

"Getting tired is the least of my concern in the business, sir! My only aim is to give satisfaction," replied Guy.

"That is the sure road to success, my young friend. Your chances of reaching the topmost round of the ladder is quite as good as others who have just made the first step."

These words of encouragement from his employer, raised Guy's hopes considerably, and he hurried on his coat, anxious to get home, and tell his aunt and Pansey the day's happenings. While he was thus engaged, Jasper entered the room, apparently oblivious to his presence, as he stood in one corner where he was partially obscured from sight, and Mr. Fairweather had already gone.

Jasper carefully unrolled a small parcel from the tissue paper in which it was wrapped, and taking it over directly under the gas jet, gazed eagerly and fondly at the picture. He drew a prolonged sigh, and looking up suddenly, saw that he was not alone.

"Excuse me, for my seeming rudeness, but I had not noticed there was any one beside myself in here. I was

very much absorbed in a new study, over which I have been at work, and was a trifle absent-minded. I believe you are the new assistant cashier," and he turned a questioning glance upon Guy.

"Yes! That is, I have undertaken to master the difficulties in such a position. I expect, however, to find it uphill work. I am just from college, and know comparatively little of the methods of conducting business in a banking-house like this."

"I should think a professional career would be more to your taste than commercial life. It seems a waste of powder, so to speak, for a college graduate to choose a business of this prosaic kind," spoke Jasper, thinking sadly, how dull and prosy it seemed to him.

"Perhaps most college graduates do look upon commercial life as requiring less brain-work than a profession; but I think it takes even more intelligence to become a successful banker or commission merchant. I have a great many misgivings in regard to my abilities in this direction; but I shall not abandon it until I have made sure that I cannot succeed. However, I ought not to burden a stranger with my own private affairs; but my mind is so engrossed in this effort that I sometimes forget that others are not equally interested with myself," continued Guy, apologetically, turning to leave the coat-room.

"I hope we shall not be strangers, sir; but I have not the pleasure to know your name?"

"Hurl—ah—Rumford!" stammered Guy, suddenly recollecting his new name.

"Indeed! A fine old English name. The present Earl of Rumford is expected here this winter, and is to have a private reception, I understand. We expect to meet him in society circles—that is Miss Helen Dunn and

myself. Perhaps you are not aware that I am Major Dunn's step-son, Mr. Rumford."

"I was not, although I had learned that he had a step-son in the banking-house," and Guy looked as if he felt a trifle disappointed at this piece of information. For he had learned to look upon the head of the firm as a tyrant, and was sorry that so pleasant and apparently good a young man, should be subject to his overbearing rule at home, as well as in business hours.

"You spoke of the present Earl of Rumford, and that he was expected to visit America this winter. He is a relative of mine. I do not exactly know how near, however. My great-grandfather was the Earl of Rumford, a century ago. Grandmother had the poor taste to elope with an English opera-singer—an artist in his line—but you can readily see it was descending many degrees below English nobility to fall in love and marry one of unknown birth and station."

"Yes; I suppose so. But the direction one's love will turn is as unaccountable as it is unhappy in its results," replied Jasper reflectively, a slight color rising to his cheeks.

"I know. But it is generally best for all concerned to control such ill-timed passions. They sometimes lead to a great deal of distress, and oft-times to open disgrace;" and Guy's thoughts turned to his own family history, and the devastation runaway matches had wrought for them. And Jasper was thinking of his betrothal to one young lady, and his overpowering, helpless love for another, and that other—an errand girl!

He moved toward the light again, so that the blaze fell full upon the sketch in his hand, saying :

"Mr Rumford, would you care to look at one of my poor attempts at portrait painting? My mind is not in a

banking-house; you see. It is wholly centered upon my one inspiration—art.”

He turned the likeness of the young girl toward Guy, and held it for a moment in the bright light. One look was sufficient for Guy to recognize the face it represented. He started, and colored slightly. But Jasper only interpreted this manifestation of surprise to the same reason why he himself could not look upon it calmly. A feeling akin to jealousy for a moment took possession of him.

“It is a beautiful face, and I should think very artistically executed. But I am always chary of expressing my uncultivated opinions upon so divine a subject as art; although my father was both poet and artist. But where did you find this angelic face? or was it a mere conception of your own?”

“Oh, no, Mr Rumford. She is an errand girl, who brings my mother’s and Miss Helen’s costumes from their dressmaker. I saw her for the first time last night, and sketched her face from memory.”

Guy was on the point of saying that he must have a remarkable memory, but he stopped just in time to conceal the fact that he had seen the original himself. For some reason he did not wish to reveal that knowledge to the young man before him. He trembled for both Pansey and Jasper, and felt alarmed at the young man’s evident emotions as he gazed in rapture upon the copy of this lovely young errand girl’s face. He thought, perhaps, it might in the end bring disgrace and ruin upon the girl.

But now the janitor came around to see that the lights were extinguished, and Jasper took out his watch, and found that they had been conversing nearly an hour, for the hands pointed to six. The two young men, who had so unceremoniously made each other’s acquaintance, went down together and out into the street, which had

quieted down from the deafening rumble of traffic. The sidewalk venders had not all left their stands. A few had remained to catch the trade of the last stragglers from the great commercial houses.

"Do you go up in the stage, Mr. Rumford, or take the elevated for more rapid transit? For my own part I still cling to the plodding old stages. The elevated cars are so crowded at this time of day."

"I go in the stage, because it takes me so much nearer home than the elevated cars," replied Guy. "Shall we go up together?"

"If you will wait while I go to the vender on the opposite corner and get a corsage bouquet for Miss Dunn to wear at dinner. She always expects me to bring her one, and I do not like to disappoint her."

So saying, he left Guy on the banking-house steps, and went to the old flower vender, who had come to know and look for his young customer each night. He culled over the nosegays more critically than usual, and seemed harder to please; but the vender was rewarded by selling a double portion of these sweet gifts of nature. He had his selections wrapped in a paper; but not until Guy had noticed that one of them was a small bunch of pansies. Then Jasper hailed a stage, and the two got in together.

CHAPTER XXV.

A FAMILY TALK.

After dinner, Guy related to his attentive listeners his first day's experience in the banking business. Pansey sat upon a low stool at one side of our hero, while his aunt swayed to and fro in her willow rocker opposite.

"Do tell us all about it, Guy, for we have talked of nothing else to-day except about the work, and Pansey is as anxious to hear as I am."

"Well, then, in the first place I am no longer Guy Hurlbert. I have changed my name since morning, Auntie."

"Changed your *name*, did you say, my boy?"

"Changed your name, Mr. Guy? How very funny!" and Pansey's eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"Yes! It must either be that or lose the position, and so I bowed to fate, and adopted the new name."

"And what may we call you now, then, pray?"

"Guy, if you please; simply Guy, at home. But I have assumed the more noble cognomen of Rumford, which is to be my business name!" and he gave a short, nervous laugh, which did not reach far below the surface.

"Now, if you have jested long enough, please explain what all this incredible nonsense is about, Guy!" replied his aunt, looking very much as if she considered the whole matter a joke.

"Well, to make a long story short, then, my dear aunt, I will state that Mr. Fairweather informed me on my arrival

at the banking-house this morning, that for reasons he could not now very well explain, it would be impossible for me to fill the position bearing my rightful name. Could there have been any stigma attached to that name, except what extreme poverty entailed, Auntie?"

"There is no stigma, whatever, attached to the name of Hurlbert in this particular family, to my knowledge, Guy. The only one who ever did anything to disgrace us was your uncle John, in the way of drinking too much, sometimes; but he is no longer on earth to trouble any of his remaining relatives, poor fellow; as I told you that day in the Astor House, when you were a boy ten years old. How could Mr. Fairweather have known anything about your dead father's poverty. And even if he did, is poverty a crime, that the children should be punished for, by being driven to change their names before even a place in which to toil for their bread should be granted them? It sometimes seems as if there were neither justice in earth or heaven. I fear I am getting to be wicked and rebellious lately. When I think how hopelessly some of us have to toil, never reaping any of its fruits until it is too late to be of use to us; and I see others gathering in the golden sheaves, who do not deserve them, and who have never been in any way of the least benefit to a human being in all their useless lives; I wonder what we were created for."

Pansey looked with open-eyed wonder at this sudden outburst from the usually calm and trustful Mrs. Withington.

"Why, Auntie! I am glad that I am not the only one who has such thoughts. But it is more wicked in me, because I have been taken care of when I couldn't do anything for myself. I am afraid, now that I come to think it over, that I am one of the useless ones, gathering in the golden sheaves which some one else has sown."

“Now, my little Pansey Blossom, I shall not allow you to talk that way about yourself. What should I have done that dreadful night on the train coming from Kansas, or later, after we arrived home, without you to nurse and console me? Your short life has all been made up of usefulness to others. The doctor has told me how you watched over the poor woman who took you away from the organ-grinder’s boy. You have a brave champion in that little city doctor, Pansey,” said Guy.

“Well, for my part, I feel rebuked by that innocent girl for my rash and foolish speech. I will try and be more thankful for my mercies in future. But it seems sometimes as if one must give vent to their rebellious thoughts. The better way would be to crush them in the bud, I suppose.”

At this juncture there was a ring at the bell, and when Magaret opened the door, Miss Forbes rushed past her, as if running away from the falling snow-flakes, and rapped upon the workroom door with the handle of her umbrella. Pansey opened the door, and was unceremoniously greeted by a vigorous stamp of the spinster’s feet, and a resolute shake of her long fur cloak.

“I expect we’re in for a hard, cold snow-storm. The wind is in jest the right quarter for it, and there’s a fine, solid coatin’ of ice to cover up, so that people can break their bones without the trouble of goin’ to a roller skatin’ rink. Well! how are you all? You *look* well, and that’s half the battle, anyhow! For my part, I got so lonesome I couldn’t stand it in my room alone no longer. You see, good company down here’s what’s brought me out in this snow-storm!” and she paused, to inflate her exhausted lungs.

“Why, is it snowing fast, Miss Forbes? It was bright starlight about the time we lighted the gas, and I

thought we were going to have a clear, cold night. I am real sorry there is likely to be a storm to-morrow," said Pansey, ruefully.

"Why, to-morrow, any more than another day, child?" queried the spinster.

"Because Mr. Guy has to go to business now, and it's hard getting through big snowdrifts.

"Why you silly little puss. Mr. Guy is a brave young man, and not afraid of snowdrifts. You are the one to get the worst of it, if there is any worst to it, going out on errands. Snow clings to petticoats worse than it does to trousers," and here the exhausted spinster seated herself in an easy chair, placed by the ever gallant Guy beside himself.

"I suppose you remember that horse I told you about the other night—dear me! though I do believe 'twas last night! Time drags awful slow-like it seems to me;" lowering her voice, as if these last words were spoken to herself.

"Yes, I remember. I could scarcely forget such devotion to dumb beasts as you evinced when you paid seventy-five dollars for a worthless horse," answered Guy.

"Well, I must tell you what happened this mornin'. You see the truth is, I've come to the tail end of my horse scheme, so to speak. The hostler took him out of his stall to groom his rough skin, as I'd asked him to yesterday, and the first thing that hostler knew, the old creetur's tail dropped right off! Yes, actually fell off on to the stable floor."

"He must have been very badly put together, Miss Forbes," laughed Guy; while Pansey and Mrs. Withington stared at their visitor, as if they considered it all a very odd joke.

"Yes," continued she, "it really and truly *did!* and

the hostler said it was a very sad tale he had to tell me about my horse. Well, you see that long, handsome tail of his, was the unfortunate critter's best feature, so to speak, and I could never endure to look at him after such a calamity; for to tell the truth, he was the very worst lookin' object I ever seen, with that little stub of a tail stickin' straight up in the air. The wretched beast seemed to know it, too, for he looked dreadful sheepish-like when I came in and gazed at him with disappointment writ all over my own face. Well, the end of it all was, I told the groom to give him a good strong dose of clareform, and put him out the world as easy-like as possible, for I knew he'd out-lived his usefulness, like a great many human beings, that can't he put out of the way, no matter how much them that have to keep 'em round wish they could get rid of them. Well, I'm powerful glad it's all over, and the poor creetur is gone where he'll have a long rest, if he did cost me seventy-five dollars!" and she brushed away a little salt drop from her cheek, which was shed more for the sad fate of her horse, than the loss of the money she paid for him.

"Well, now, Mr. Guy, I should like to know how you got on with your new business to-day."

Here Guy related the same story he had already told his aunt and Pansey; which tale surprised the spinster very much.

While they were thus engaged in conversation, there came two quick, sharp strokes of the bell.

"A messenger boy!" spoke Guy.

"It may be one of my customers," suggested Mrs. Withington, who had her mind so burdened with these troublesome beings, that she thought no one else would be likely to come to her house at that time in the evening. Pansey was at the door before Margaret had gotten as far as the lower stair of the basement flight. A small boy stood

upon the steps, tightly clutching a carefully wrapped package.

"Does this be Mrs. Withington's house?" he asked, in a rather girlish voice.

"Yes; is this package for her?" questioned Pansey.

"No, miss; I spects it's for you. Is your name Pansey, and do you run errands for the dressmaker?"

"Yes; I am Pansey, and I do errands. Are you sure it is for me?"

"Yes, I'm dead sure it's for you. The gentleman what sent it told me to be sure not to give it to nobody but Pansey."

She took the parcel from the boy's hand with a perplexed and half incredulous look, and asking him to wait till she returned, ran back into the workroom. With trembling fingers she unrolled the delicate tissue paper, when a lovely bunch of fresh pansies greeted her astonished gaze, and a small slip of paper fluttered to the floor. She stooped and picked it up with a flushed face, and going near the light read: "For little Pansey, from her friend Jasper."

Mystified and perplexed, she went over to Guy, and handed him the note, saying:

"I do not know any one by that name, is not there some mistake, Mr. Guy?"

Guy did not remember of ever having heard that name, but he did recollect the beautiful bunch of pansies, and he readily surmised where they were from, and thought he understood the sentiment which prompted his new acquaintance to send them to the errand girl.

"Take these, and wrap them up again, Pansey, and give them to the messenger boy to return to the sender, and tell him to say that you do not accept bouquets from strangers."

Pansey obeyed him without hesitation, and dismissed the boy with an air of dignity, such as an offended princess

might assume. But all the while her heart beat like a drum stick, and she was in a whirl of excitement.

The two women sat staring at the young people as if they could think of no fitting words to express their astonishment, and they did not find their tongues until it was all over, and the excited girl came back into the workroom and dropped into a chair, her face looking about as white as her little ruffled cambric apron.

"What is this all about?" exclaimed the two woman in a breath, after they had recovered their power of speech; glaring first at Guy and then at Pansey, as if they were both guilty culprits, who had been plotting some crime together.

"It is nothing much, ladies; only some one has made a mistake, and sent a messenger to the wrong place with a bouquet."

Pansey looked at Guy with a frightened stare, as if she feared the floor might open and swallow him out of sight, for such a piece of dissembling. But he looked as innocent as if nothing unusual had happened. The two women felt very much relieved to know it was nothing worse than the mistake of a messenger boy. And yet they could not account for Pansey's pallor and apparent excitement on scientific principles. And so they told her there was no occasion to be frightened for a slight blunder like that. And Pansey made no answer.

She was not like a society young lady, who is the happy recipient of bouquets every day, nearly. She had never been noticed in that way before, in her humble and barren life amid poverty. It made her pulses flutter, and her breath come in quick short gasps. Then her pallor turned to a feverish crimson, and her head whirled, and her temples throbbed with the intensity of her emotions. Somehow, she felt as if the gift was not intended for any disre-

spect to herself, or unlawful designs on the part of the donor. Impression, or instinct, seemed very strong in this young girl. She could generally guess at what was false and what was true in people's motives. And after a few minutes thought, she seemed to be impressed with the idea that it was the young man whom she had met at Major Dunn's, the night before, who had sent the bunch of pansies. She had not heard his name called; but she thought Jasper an appropriate one for so handsome a young gentleman.

"But why did he think of sending an humble errand girl like herself, who had lugged a cumbersome box to his house, such a beautiful gift as flowers?" she soliloquized. She did not look upon herself as at all a suitable person for the bestowal of such presents. And yet it was very sweet to her girlish heart to be thus remembered by the rich and handsome young gentleman. It quickened her heart-beats a little, as she thought it over, but she dare not indulge in a hope that some day she might know more of this new acquaintance. While her thoughts were thus running riot through her brain, her little, taper fingers were moving nervously among the basting threads of the sack she held in her lap, and Mrs. Withington and her spinster friend were consulting together over the furbelows which were to adorn the latter's new toilet. As for Guy, he watched the excited girl in silence, and imagined he could interpret her thoughts by the quiver of her sensitive mouth, and the fluttered manner in which she pulled at the closely adhering basting threads. He was very much puzzled at Jasper's actions. He thought he did not appear like a young man who would amuse himself with an innocent and unprotected girl; for he seemed too manly and open-hearted for such wickedness. But his favorable impressions of Jasper were somewhat shaken by this imprudent act.

He now began to take a new and deeper interest in this unknown young orphan girl. His gallantry asserted itself, and a fresh impulse to guard and protect her took possession of him. Would it develope into something deeper and broader and stronger, as the months went by? She was now the only young girl with whom he had any especial acquaintance, strange as it may seem. He had hitherto been so full of care and hard study, that he found no time to cultivate his social qualities. His kind and motherly aunt had filled his small and limited world altogether, socially.

That night, when Pansey retired to her room, the fancy seized her to go to the small trunk that Mrs. Withington had given her, and overhaul her trinkets, which were so associated with the past and the hallowed memory of her dead benefactress.

She had experienced very strange and conflicting emotions, taken altogether that night, and she could scarcely tell whether joy or unhappiness predominated. She clasped the treasured trinket box between her small hands, and knelt at the bedside to offer up her evening prayer for protection through the night. She had a little extra petition to put up that evening, too. In the most simple manner, she asked the Lord to forgive her for feeling pleased when that bright bunch of pansies came to her from such an unexpected source; and then she ended by asking that the giver might not be offended because she had returned them with that harsh message dictated by Guy. How helpless we poor mortals all are, and how surely the time comes, sooner or later, when we must cry out in our helplessness for strength and wisdom from on high.

She arose from her knees with a feeling that the Lord had heard her simple petition, and sat upon the bed to

reflect, comforted with the assurance of Divine protection and guidance.

Then a wish that somehow she could have a revelation of who she was and what had been her origin, took possession of her. She thought if she only knew that secret, it might give her the right to be noticed and treated as an equal, by the very ones she now had to serve as an inferior.

Her tears fell thick and fast upon her folded hands, and yet she could scarcely tell why she shed those saline drops. The girl was altogether a little bundle of inconsistencies that night. She was but a child in the experience of society ways, and so she felt almost like rebelling against Guy's interference in commanding her to return the bouquet with that harsh message.

She could not for a moment harbor suspicious thoughts toward the one who had sent her this little offering, and thrills of something akin to joy brought swift blushes to her cheeks, and dilated the pupils of her soft, liquid eyes. This was the turning point in the girl's life, and she was no longer the contented and happy errand girl of the week before.

At length Pansey began to grow sleepy, and so she put away the cherished reminders of her young life with "Aunty Malony," and drying her tears, sought the repose of her pillow. She sighed herself to sleep; but had she been called to account on awakening the next morning, she could not have given a very satisfactory explanation of her perplexed and disturbing emotions. But, fortunately, there was no one who would, or who had the right to call her to account. And so her girlish life slipped by.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A STRUGGLE TO BE HONORABLE.

When the messenger boy returned to Jasper Montrose with the rejected bunch of pansies, it was such an unexpected repulse, that he scolded the unhappy lad as the culprit who had made some blunder in the delivery. He could scarcely believe that the girl was well enough versed in the wickedness of the world to be suspicious of this well-intended gift, which he thought so appropriate to her name and flower-like face.

“Are you telling me the truth, boy? That *she* would send me such a message, I doubt very much.”

The boy insisted that he had told the truth and nothing else, and gave him additional particulars, each word of which gave the sensitive and infatuated young man a fresh stab.

He dismissed the messenger and carried the rejected little nosegay up to his room; for it was nearly ten o'clock when the boy returned, and he had bidden his mother and Helen good-night, and left them fifteen minutes before.

On reaching his sleeping chamber, he unrolled the paper from the bouquet, and held it for a moment before him, in silent admiration of the exquisite tintings and soft velvety petals of the bright blossoms. Then he remembered that her dear little hands had clasped them; and regardless of the snub she had administered to his boldness, he held the flowers to his lips and kissed them. But

no sooner had he committed this spontaneous act of folly, than he mentally called himself a traitor. And yet it was but the one grand passion of his being asserting itself. He was as powerless to stay it as a beggar peasant would be in an attempt to dethrone the emperor who ruled over him. As helpless as a galley slave to free himself from the chains which fetter him. He had hitherto been clear-headed enough not to make such ludicrous mistakes as he committed that night. He removed his shoes to replace them by his toilet slippers; and no sooner had he done this, than he put his shoes upon his feet again, and buttoned them. Then he picked up a slipper, and attempted to pull it on over his shoes. Finding that it refused to go on, he held it up to see if he had his own slippers. At length it dawned upon him that it would be easier to get them upon his feet if his shoes were removed; never suspecting that he had once before gone through that operation.

It was much the same with his collar and neck-tie, which he took off and put on three times in succession, before he came to his senses enough to know what he started to do. At last his head landed upon the pillow and it was a relief to close his strained eyelids, and experience the bliss of being alone.

Yet he was not alone! He had the company of two charmers traveling through his brain in reckless confusion. First, Helen turned her proud head toward him and demanded to be worshiped. Then Pansey sat in a chair in the front hall, with a cumbersome box beside her, and stared at him with her luminous, pathetic eyes, and her sweet voice sounded in his ears: "I am only the dress-maker's errand girl, and I have brought home the young lady's dress, sir!"

His brain seemed on fire, and he tossed from side to side like a restless fever patient, until at length he fell

asleep. Then Pansey came and put her small white hand upon his throbbing temples, and the soft and magnetic touch quieted him into a profound slumber and he wandered into the green pastures of happy dreamland. Helen had vanished now, and Pansey took hold of his hand while they went together into a beautiful garden of roses and pansies, and sat together upon a sofa made of violets, while the fragrance filled his senses with delight. Suddenly they looked a few paces ahead of them, beside a clump of laurels, and saw Helen lying upon a couch of the blossoms, and beckoning them to come to her. They went and stood beside her. She was pale, and her eyes had a glassy look. She raised herself from the couch and took off her engagement ring, and put it on Pansey's finger, saying: "There, poor little Pansey, take it and Jasper, and be happy!" Then she turned her face from them, drew a deep, heavy breath and expired.

This dream had now turned into a nightmare, and he tried to shriek, but no sound escaped his lips. He struggled once more, and relief came by awakening. But he carried the impression of that dream for years after. He was so thoroughly impressed with its reality, that he remembered distinctly every situation and every word spoken by each, and it was a long time after he awoke before he could persuade himself that it was not a reality. He arose and looked out of the window.

The snow was falling fast, and the gaslight flickered in the fitful gusts of wind that at times nearly extinguished it. The balcony in front of the bay window was covered with several inches of snow, and he saw something that looked like the shadow of a man, standing inside the railing, in a listening attitude, as if he had heard some sound from within.

He hastily put on his pantaloons and dressing-gown, thrust his feet in his toilet slippers, and crept downstairs,

stealing softly into the parlor. He stepped to the bay window, drew aside the heavy curtain drapery, and peered out upon the snow covered balcony. He then saw the substance, instead of the shadow which he had seen upstairs. The object was a tall, stout man, crouching close to the window. He stood so that the flickering gaslight fell upon his fat, burly looking face, and Jasper could see that he held something in his hand; but whether it was a revolver or some tool with which to effect an entrance, he could not tell. When Jasper's face appeared so near him at the window, he started back, screening his face with his hands.

As Major Dunn was in Europe, Jasper was the only man in the house except the servants, and he was utterly defenseless; so he considered discretion the better part of valor, and did not make any attempt to combat the man single-handed. The robber was not desperate enough to attempt opening the window on Jasper, as, of course, he could not know but his enemy was well armed.

The young man soon collected his scattered senses, sufficient to think of calling the police, and he turned and fled through the folding doors into the back parlor, from thence to the side hallway, and out into the street—for theirs was a corner house. He plunged through the snow-drifts in his toilet slippers, and hastened immediately to the nearest police station, as he very well knew that an officer could never be found at night upon the streets when he was wanted.

He rushed breathlessly into the station-house, made known his business, and was soon returning homeward with two stout officers.

They turned the corner, and crept up the front steps, as this was the only way they could reach the balcony. He was still there, and at work with some tool upon the window casing; but his practiced ear caught the sound of their approaching footsteps. He turned with a quick

movement, and seeing what he had to contend against, sprang, with a desperate leap, over the railing, and plunged into the street. Picking himself up as quickly as a cat, he leaped on through the snow-drifts, and was out of sight before the officers had reached the street again.

After Jasper had requested the men to keep watch of the house the remainder of the night, he crept back up stairs to his room, with his socks and slippers filled with snow, and his breathing organs very much out of repair.

Mrs. Dunn and Helen had slept through it all, for Jasper had been very careful lest they should awake; since the shock would be terrible to them both, if they knew the truth.

Jasper felt certain that he should recognize this burglar if ever he saw him again, as he was not one whose face or figure would easily be forgotten. But no clue or trace of him was found until nearly a year later, when he was identified in the prisoners dock at a court of justice.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MISSING KEYS.

A month has elapsed since last we looked in upon Guy Rumford at the banking-house, and it is the last day of the old year, and the last half of the day. While our hero was busy at his books, absorbed in the figure columns before him, the office door opened, and Mr. Fairweather entered. As he approached Guy's desk his attention was arrested by an odd and antiquated key which laid upon the desk beside the ledger.

"This is a peculiar looking key, Mr. Rumford. Does it belong here?"

"Oh, no, sir! I supposed that was in my pocket upon the ring with my other keys. It belongs to an old-fashioned chest of drawers, once the property of my grandmother Hurlbert. When my grand aunt came to New York to take me away to Massachusetts at the time my parents died, and I was ten years of age, she took this relic of family identity away with her. It contains some old laces and other trifles possessed by my great-grandmother in her younger days. This chest has a counterpart, or companion piece somewhere, probably in the present earl's house in England. The one in my possession was presented my grandmother, from Lady Helen Rumford, her mother. The fac-simile was given at the same time to her other daughter, who died before grandmother's marriage and flight to this country. Through the assistance of her maid, and the old butler, who were in grandmother's confidence, the treasure was secured, and secreted in the deer park belonging to the estate. The day before the ship left for America it was removed from its hiding place, and put on board after midnight, and so found its way to New York with the fleeing pair."

"Quite a history, truly. This antique chest of drawers may perhaps prove an important clue to your lost family name and estates. Sometime I hope you will be placed in your lawful position."

"I might have some hopes of this, sir, if the noble blood had been perpetuated on the male side of our family; but in case there should be no descendents from the earl's sons, the title becomes extinct, and I think the estates would be claimed by the English government. American descendents, the grandchildren of a disinherited daughter, would scarcely be considered heirs by right, even of estates."

“Had your great-grandfather any brothers living at the time of his daughter’s elopement, that you know of?”

“He had a younger brother, who was dissipated, and ran away to the Continent in disgrace, shortly after the earl succeeded to the title. At the time of grandmother’s elopement, the earl had one son living, who was the youngest of the family. That is all I know regarding my ancestry, which is but little better than knowing nothing at all,” and as Guy ceased speaking he drew a bunch of keys from his pocket to slip this one upon the ring. But to his astonishment two of the banking-house keys were missing.

He stepped back from his desk and looked panic stricken. His employer saw that something was evidently wrong, and he turned a questioning glance toward the young man.

“My banking-house keys are gone, sir.”

“Probably you have mislaid them. Have you no recollection of removing them from the ring?”

“No, sir ; but I laid the bunch down when I came in early this morning, and was called into the next office by Mr. Montrose. He wanted some information about the date of a bill that went through our hands first. When I came back I noticed the keys, and picking them up without looking at them, put the bunch in my pocket, and I had not even noticed that the chest key was on my desk until you called my attention to it, just now. I left some keys at a locksmith’s near here, which my aunt wished to have duplicated, but I do not think it possible that I could have taken off any of my other keys with them, when at this shop. But if such a thing were possible, I shall most likely find them to-night, when I go for the duplicated keys. But I necessarily feel very uneasy, not to know for a certainty what has become of them. This locksmith has a peculiar sign, which attracted my attention the first day I came to the banking-house to business. We pass it on

our way to the restaurant for lunch. The sign reads : 'John Davy, artist locksmith.' "

Search was made all around the little office now, but no keys could be found, and the case was given up as hopeless.

"I do not wish Mr. Dunn to know that you have lost the keys," spoke Mr. Fairweather. "He is a peculiar man, and inclined to be suspicious of those he had no voice in employing. He would most likely say you were careless and negligent of your duties in so responsible a position as this, and perhaps make it so unpleasant for you, that you would rather leave than be subject to his cutting remarks and constant watching. I will loan you my keys for the present, and if you do not find yours soon, the best way for all concerned, will be to have duplicates made by these."

It was now time to close the ledgers and leave the office, as it was the last day of the Old Year, and four o'clock, at which hour the bank was always closed the night before a holiday.

The other clerks had already gone, and Guy and his employer were left alone. He closed his books and put them away, and commenced to make preparations to leave ; but Mr. Fairweather seemed inclined to linger and talk with the young man. He had an important society event to speak about, and had always looked upon this handsome fellow as an equal.

"I suppose, Mr. Rumford, you have heard about the Vandewater reception, which is to be given on the tenth of next month, and that the Earl of Rumford is to be there ?"

"I do remember of reading the announcement in some society journal, although I seldom take much interest in society matters. They are far beyond the reach of humble and struggling young clerks."

"My especial errand in here now was to invite you to go with my daughter and me, on our invitations. I want you should have the privilege of seeing this much lionized earl, to whom you are related."

"You are very kind, sir, to invite me; and I hope you will not think me ungrateful if I feel obliged to decline the honor. I have not the requisite dress suit, to speak very plainly about my circumstances; and I fear I should appear very much out of place in the midst of so much grandeur and elegance," and Guy's lips quivered with some hidden emotion which stirred his proud and sensitive nature, and made him wish himself either a nobleman or a contented plebian. As it was, he felt that he had no right in the society of the only class he cared to mingle. His pride and poverty were at constant logger-heads, and he often chafed under the yoke.

At this juncture two young ladies entered the office together, and approached Guy's desk. Mr. Fairweather's back was toward them, but it was evident the object of their visit was to see him. Guy called his employer's attention to the unexpected visitors. They were Helen Dunn and Florence Fairweather. This was the first time that Guy had ever seen these young ladies, and although altogether opposed to making the acquaintance of those he considered above him in the social scale, his heart rose in his throat as he thought of the possibility of an introduction to these handsome young creatures. They were both beautiful in their different types. Florence possessed the charm and attractiveness of rare expression, and Helen the exquisite chiselling of features which renders a Greek statue so faultless. It could scarcely be called love at first sight on Guy's part toward Miss Fairweather; but true it was, when he for the first time looked into the depths of her wonderful eyes, he recollected the princess of his singular dream on

the old cottage veranda, when he fell asleep poring over his algebra, and there seemed to be a sudden new interest in life, although he inwardly trembled that he should allow himself to indulge this wild thought. It seemed to him but the reproduction of the "Romance of a Poor Young Man," on life's real stage.

"And the banker's daughter, what of her," ask you? Her side of the romance will better be understood by watching her while she goes through the ceremony expected at an introduction. A vivid blush overspreads her face, as her father presents her to "Mr. Rumford," and her eyelids droop beneath his earnest and all unconsciously ardent gaze into the depths of her hazel eyes.

Her helpless confusion did not escape the practiced eye of Miss Dunn, who on being introduced, bowed graciously, without change of color or a shade of embarrassment, and mentioned having heard Jasper speak of him at home.

Florence had driven down in their carriage for her father, and just as she left the house, Helen came to call upon her. She therefore invited her to drive with her to the banking-house.

Guy expressed his pleasure at having met the young ladies, with the well-bred grace of a true gentleman, and bidding them adieu, started for the artist locksmiths.

The other three soon followed, and entered the carriage together. They drove Helen home, but Florence, who was expected to entertain her visitor by Mr. Fairweather, seemed absorbed in reverie.

"Papa, you spoke this morning of inviting Mr. Rumford to attend the Vandewater reception; but I thought, perhaps, with all your business perplexities, you might possibly have forgotten it."

"No, daughter; I did not forget to invite him. We

were discussing the matter when you two young ladies entered the office."

"And has he accepted, papa?"

"He thinks he cannot attend, Florence. He has not been in society any as yet, and he has not suitable dress, or even the confidence to appear in fashionable society."

"He will be all the better for that, papa."

"All the better at a swell reception without a dress suit, child?"

"No, no, papa! I mean all the better for not being a society young man. They are the most insipid creatures in existence, and not worth the money they spend in pomade for their moustaches. Don't you think he could be persuaded to change his mind, papa?"

"I do not see why you should be so anxious for him to go. He is only a poor clerk, at best, and I dare say would not know what to do with his hands at such an affair as the Vanderwater reception!" spoke Miss Dunn, with a semblance of being shocked at her friend's bad taste, as she chose to call it.

"I do not think he will need any instructions about holding his hands; but if he should, there will be plenty of young ladies who would be glad of an opportunity to teach him!" retorted the spirited girl. But just as she had ended her defensive speech, they reached Major Dunn's door, and here we will leave them for the present.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW THE OLD YEAR ENDED.

On leaving the banking-house, Guy proceeded at once to the artist locksmiths for the duplicate keys. He had also some faint hope of finding the missing ones mentioned in the preceding chapter. But he was destined to disappointment in this, for they had not been seen by the locksmith. He took the keys handed him by the man, and after asking him to give a thorough search over his shop, started on his homeward walk, for he felt the need of fresh air and exercise ; and he preferred it to hanging on the outside of crowded street cars and stages.

He reached home, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, and a keen relish for old Margaret's well cooked dinner, just as the little clock on the mantel in his aunt's dining-room was striking six. He brought in a whiff of cold, fresh air, and went with manly strides over to his aunt, and kissed her withered cheek, before removing his overcoat.

"You look rosy and happy the last night of the old year, my boy !" spoke his aunt, returning the caress in a motherly fashion, and patting his handsome face playfully.

"Yes, Auntie ; I feel quite happy to-night. I can but contrast it with last year, and the year before. But where is Pansey ?"

This young girl had become one of the chief charms of his home life now.

“ Oh, she has gone out with Miss Forbes. There was a great deal of mystery in their movements, and considerable whispering between them. I surmised that they might be out shopping for New Year’s presents. Miss Forbes is full of the coming reception at Vanderwaters. She says it is a great shame that you cannot have the required dress suit for that affair. She thinks the Earl of Rumford ought to meet his only male relative in America. But I told her there was no possibility of your having an invitation, even if you had the required dress suit.”

“ Well, Auntie, I have already received an invitation from Mr. Fairweather; but, of course, I declined the honor. I very well knew that it would not be possible. And even if it were, I should have very little enjoyment in society that did not include you and Pansey. It would seem like selfishness for me to leave you two at home alone, while I mingled in society far above our station in life.”

“ Society looks with different eyes upon rising young men with a college education, Guy, than upon dressmakers and errand girls. Of course it is but natural they should.”

“ My blood is no better than yours, Auntie; and I see no reason why I should be treated better socially.”

“ Yes it is, Guy. The noble blood is on your grandmother’s side, and not on the Hurlberts.”

“ Ah, I had quite forgotten the noble blood; but I do not chose to esteem it any better than my grandfathers.”

But here their conversation was broken off by the entrance of Miss Forbes and Pansey, just returned from holiday shopping.

“ This room is as hot as Nebuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace, I declare to goodness!” was the spinster’s first salutation, dropping into the nearest chair,

“ You are excited with shopping and walking, Miss

Forbes ; I don't think the thermometer is above seventy," replied the dressmaker, passing her visitor a fan, and reminding her that her sealskin sack was buttoned tightly up to her chin.

"Yes, I know it is buttoned up ; but I can't stop half a minute, and I don't want the fuss of fastenin' it up again so soon."

"Can you not stay to dinner with us ?" asked Guy and his aunt simultaneously.

"No, I don't see how I can. I've got so much to do to-night, I shouldn't have come back at all, only I wanted to tell Mr. Guy that I heard through the collector's young lady that he was goin' to have an invitation to Vandewater's reception, because he told her he heard Mr. Fairweather tell Major Dunn that he was goin' to ask young Rumford to go with them. And I want him to go by all means. I think I've fixed it so he can go ; but I won't tell you how jest now. But if you don't go, I shall feel dreadfully disappointed, that's all. Now I *must* go ! Good-night, everybody," and the eccentric spinster flounced out with her habitual bluster.

Pansey had gone upstairs to remove her coat and hat, and she lingered a few minutes to look at her smiling reflection in the small glass which hung over her washstand. For some reason, scarcely definable to herself, she had taken more interest in her looks and appearance since she had met Jasper Montrose ; although she tried not to harbor such a feeling, which she secretly felt to be wicked vanity. She turned away with a little sigh, descended the stairs, and entered the dining-room.

Margaret cleared up the workroom while they were at dinner ; as all the reception costumes for New Year's day had been finished, and Pansey was to take the last one home directly after she had finished dinner. This one was

for Helen Dunn, and a dainty confection of electric blue shaded plush, combined with trimmings of amber satin. It was one of the dressmaker's finest conceptions, and could not fail to give satisfaction, she was positive. Pansey arose from the table and put on her coat and hat, while Mrs. Withington packed the costume smoothly in a box, and handing it to her with her car-fare, asked her if she would be warm enough in her little sack, as the weather was stinging cold.

Pansey assured her "auntie" that she was "as warm as toast," and started on her way with a light heart, and hurried to catch a car, as she was very anxious to be back in time for the arrival of the purchases she had assisted Miss Forbes to make that afternoon.

On her arrival at Major Dunn's, the door was opened by George, who, since her first visit there, had thought best to be more polite to the errand girl. She had delivered the package and started down the stairs again, when suddenly Jasper appeared in the hallway. He had somehow learned that Pansey was in the house, and when Helen's door closed and he heard her nimble footsteps in the marble hall below, determined to tell her that he was sorry to have offended her in sending the bunch of pansies. She began to explain that Guy had told her she must return them to the sender, when Helen made her appearance in the hall, and found them conversing together. This, added to the fact of having discovered the girl's portrait among Jasper's sketches, enraged the young lady beyond endurance, and she called to him in angry, trembling tones, saying :

"This then is the way you hold stolen interviews with errand girls. I think it is about time Mrs. Withington was informed of the impertinence of this brazen young girl, and her boldness in the house of her customers."

Jasper turned and went to his room after Pansey had gone, and the house seemed hollow and desolate to him.

The truth had commenced to dawn upon him, that nearly all his dreams of future happiness centered upon this poor and unknown errand girl. Still he was piqued and troubled because Helen had found him talking to her, but perhaps more on account of the abuse heaped upon Pansey by his betrothed, than fear of anger to himself.

A tempest of emotions and passions swept over him, while he sat, with his brow firmly knit, gazing into vacancy, and bewailing his ill-fated engagement to Helen Dunn.

Meanwhile Pansey was wending her way homeward, mortified and disgraced forever, as she thought, in the eyes of the Dunn family, and perhaps even Jasper himself; which latter trial would be the hardest of all to bear, for a reason she did not then understand.

An hour later, Mrs. Withington, Guy and Pansey sat together in the workroom talking over the poor girl's bitter experience in the Dunn mansion. Neither of the two listeners to her tale of trouble could think that the young girl was to blame.

But Mrs. Dunn and Helen were among her best customers, and so Mrs. Withington cautioned Pansey to avoid all communication with the impulsive and imprudent Jasper. Guy did not doubt the young man's good intentions in this case; but he could see that Miss Dunn had some cause for grievance, and that Jasper was very far from being diplomatic in holding a clandestine conversation with the dressmaker's errand girl in the hallway of his own house and that of his betrothed.

It was near nine o'clock before the three had ended this unpleasant conversation, and just then there came a loud ring at the door bell. Pansey considered Margaret's rheumatic knee joints, which caused her to groan every time she ascended the stairs, and went to the door herself to

answer the summons. She soon returned bringing a ponderous box in her small hands.

"Has one of the costumes come back, I wonder?" asked the dressmaker, nervously. "Perhaps there is some dissatisfaction with Miss Dunn's," she continued, excitedly, adjusting her glasses to see if she recognized the box.

"Do not be alarmed, Auntie; it is not from any of your customers. It is for Mr. Guy," and she carried it over to him and dropped it at his feet, with a mysterious look in her round, hazel eyes.

"What can it be, I wonder?" remarked the young man in astonishment.

"Wouldn't it be a good idea to open it, and see?" suggested Pansey.

He did; and when the last piece of tissue paper was removed, he saw a stylish new dress suit, fresh from the hands of the tailor.

He seemed to have lost power of speech, and stood and stared at it as if it was some curiosity which he had paid to look upon.

"Why don't you say something, Mr. Guy? Don't you think that is a nice holiday present?" spoke Pansey, dancing around him as if she had a share in this valuable gift.

He took them out slowly and cautiously, as if he feared they might fall in pieces and disappear,—as Cinderella's fine clothing did at the ball after midnight,—and inspecting them carefully, said:

"These were made to order, I see! How did Miss Forbes—for no one else would have thought of such a magnificent New Year's gift—get my measure?"

"I got it for her, Mr. Guy, several days ago, from your Sunday suit, when you were down-town at business," answered Pansey, with a nervous little laugh.

"This is what I call a special providence, Guy. Now

you can go to the Vanderwater reception," remarked Mrs. Withington, wiping her glasses and critically examining the stitches in the new dress suit.

They all remained up until after midnight and waited to hear the chimes ring out the advent of the New Year.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PREPARING FOR THE RECEPTION.

It is the tenth of January. The hands of the dressmaker's clock point to the hour of five. No word is spoken, nor a moment wasted by the four toilers in that littered-up room. Pansey is wrestling with basting threads; Mrs. Withington is draping a skirt over the shapely form of "dummy;" one of the seamstresses is manipulating the sewing machine, and the other is plaiting flounces. There is no time for words, except to ask needful questions about the work.

Neither Pansey or the dressmaker stopped to take a mouthful of lunch. They are straining every nerve to finish Helen Dunn's costume, designed for the reception this evening. She had not made up her mind what to have in way of materials until two or three days previous, and when the final decision was given her dressmaker, there was scarcely time to complete the dainty confection in season for the long anticipated ball. Dinner had been delayed at Mrs. Withington's request until seven o'clock, and all the occupants of that shop were doing their best to finish the important costume. So, kind reader, we will not disturb them just now in their herculian task.

Guy has, after a great deal of coaxing on the part of his Aunt, Miss Forbes and Pansey, consented to attend the reception. He received a charming little perfumed note from Florence Fairweather, which purported to have been sent by the request of her father, urging him to accompany their family. This was more than he could withstand. But he felt in his great, generous heart, as if he were selfish and ungrateful to go into the company of Major Dunn's family, and leave his hard worked aunt and Pansey at home, so tired and worn out with their task of preparing Helen Dunn to shine resplendant on that occasion.

He had said as much to both of them, but they had only laughed at him for such "foolish notions," as they termed his delicate respect for their feelings. Pansey had said that he was the only proper one of them to attend such a gathering of quality and nobility. Was he not related by blood to the very earl who was to be the *ne plus ultra* of the whole affair. "Could an unknown and humble errand girl expect to attend such a gathering? Absurd! Impossible!" she said. And Mrs. Withington had told him it was great folly to think it selfish to leave her behind. She "could not enjoy such an affair; and then, she would be too tired to go, if she had fifty invitations. Why need he make himself miserable on her account?" He had given way, after all these assurances of "not minding it in the least," from Pansey and his aunt.

But down deep in the young girl's heart, she had a secret longing to see the brilliancy of the whole affair; and then Jasper would be there beside the proud Helen! She fancied it would be happiness for her just to see him, and have him turn his eyes toward her, with the strange light in them that they had shown on the first night he saw her sitting constrained and frightened in the spacious hallway at his house. She felt desolate and forsaken, too, in the

depths of her heart. The terrible reproof she received from Helen Dunn, and the withering words of condemnation she uttered, because she (Pansey) answered Jasper's questions in the most innocent manner, was so cutting to her sensitive nature. And then poor Jasper had been dreadfully reprimanded for talking to her in the hallway! She did not know which were the harder, to be censured herself, or hear him charged with the guilt of infidelity by his betrothed.

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It was fifteen minutes before seven when the last stitch of basting had been taken out of Helen Dunn's dress by the careful and expert fingers of Pansey. Mrs. Withington packed it smoothly in the box, ready for the errand girl to take home; and she was justly proud of the stylishly made costume. She wished now, like Pansey, that she could see her customer in this handiwork of her own conception. She could imagine something what it would be to look upon thousands of such brilliant toilets, and their splendor enhanced with all manner of precious gems. "What a pity," she thought, as she was folding this *recherche* toilet, "that there were none of the earl's family—that is, his acknowledged family—ladies! How the flash of old family jewels would enhance the brilliancy of the scene, could a wife or daughter accompany the earl on this grand occasion!" Kind soul! She did not envy them! Not she! It was enough for her that she could design such elegant outfits for those who could participate in these grand scenes, and besides, have something from the proceeds of her toil to assist and relieve the wants of the destitute around her. She did more actual good to her suffering fellow-beings in one year, than these very Vanderwaters had done in all their lives.

Guy came home later than usual that evening, as he had

been around making sundry necessary purchases for his first debut into society. His dress suit was perfection itself, and when Guy was inside of it, he would have done the English earldom more credit than its present incumbent could do, although Guy's hard work and poverty had been offset, on his part, by a life of ease and luxury in the most refined circles of England.

Dinner was served at seven, and then Pansey was to start to deliver the carefully protected costume to Helen Dunn. She had not been there since the night of receiving that severe upbraiding from the proud young lady. She did not think how unpleasant, and even hard a task she had before her, until she was putting on her things to go. They had been so busy all day, that she thought of but little else than the fear lest the dress would not be finished in season. Now the unhappy and humiliated manner in which she left Major Dunn's house on the evening of the last day of the old year, rushed upon her with almost overpowering force. She went down stairs with the tears of mortification still bedewing her hazel eyes. Guy saw those crystal drops, and he asked, in an anxious voice, the cause of them, going over to her and stroking her glossy auburn hair.

"Oh, Mr. Guy! I am almost afraid to go up with the young lady's dress! Do you think she will scold me again to-night? And then, what if I should see the young gentleman she's engaged to. If he speaks to me, must I answer him, Mr. Guy?"

"Certainly; my dear little Pansey! You should always answer when you are spoken to civilly, and I am sure Jasper would speak in no other way to you. Now be a brave girl, and do your duty without fear. No harm can come to you, I am sure, and when you come back I will give you the little offering I have brought home to you, for behaving so like a noble little lady when I made you send back the bouquet

that night. You will want to see me when I am dressed in that new suit that you and Miss Forbes had so many mysterious consultations over. So you must hurry home again as soon as you can, before I go up to Mr. Fairweather's. As I am to accompany them to the reception, I shall have to start earlier than I should to go directly to the Vanderwater's residence."

Pansey dried her tears, and after giving Guy a little flat pasteboard box, neatly wrapped in white paper, she took her firmly tied package, and with a kiss and words of encouragement from the dressmaker, started on her mission.

She managed to get the precious box upon the platform of the car, but the inside was so crowded that it was impossible to get in there with anything so large and cumbersome. She feared something might happen to the important costume if she left it outside and went into the car herself, and so she asked the conductor if she might stand on the platform and hold it in her arms.

But there was a crowd outside as well; and the conductor said it would not be safe, as she would be in danger of getting knocked over. Here she felt the touch of a gentleman's gloved hand upon her arm, and looking up, saw Jasper struggling toward her through the uncomfortable crowd.

"Let me take the parcel, Pansey; you will be thrown from the car if you stand here in this crowd. Go inside, child; I will see that no harm comes to the box," and with these words of command, he took the burden from the trembling Pansey's arms, and assisted her inside. The young girl was now shaking with fright. The very thing that she most dreaded in taking up the costume had happened. She would now have to go to the house in company with the young man she hoped to avoid seeing

that night, or tell him that he must leave her in the street after they got out of the car, and she must wait until he had gotten in the house and out of her sight, before it would answer for her to enter.

She was pushed and jostled from side to side by the helpless mass of passengers, who had paid their five cents fare for the privilege of being crushed into a jelly.

It being dark, and the crowd was so dense, Pansey had to depend altogether on Jasper to tell her when they had reached their street corner. The time seemed terribly long to the girl, and she held on with a convulsive grasp to the leather strap, which was just barely within her reach.

When at last they came to the end of their car ride, the young man pushed his way to Pansey, and gently taking her by the arm, led her out, and almost lifted her from the car. Jasper had never seen her look prettier or more charming than she did to-night, he thought, and without giving the least heed to consequences, he walked toward their house with her, carrying her ponderous box. She made several attempts to speak—to protest against such reckless behavior—but for a time her power of speech appeared to be cut off altogether. At length she succeeded in calling to him with a most pitiful appeal to “stop a moment.”

He halted, and turned to look upon her frightened face, which was clearly defined in the bright light from the corner gas jet.

“What is it, little Pansey? Why do you look so distressed?”

“Oh, Mr. Jasper, please stop and give me the box! I must not go to the house with you! Miss Dunn will be so dreadfully displeased with both of us, and I am afraid she will never let Auntie do another dress if I have to bring

them home to her. Oh, please do let me take the box, Mr. Jasper!" and her eyes were swimming with tears, and wore a startled, hunted look, like a fawns, when the sportsman is in swift pursuit.

The tears of a beautiful and helpless young girl would move Jasper to almost any rash act of gallantly at any time; but to see the one being for whom he would lay down his life, if necessary, to save, in such distress and agony, with the fear she felt for his fiancé, was almost intolerable. It showed him his heart more plainly than ever before. "If Helen is such a terror as that to an innocent and inoffensive girl like Pansey, why should I be tied to her for life, and make that life a burden and failure?" he asked himself, as he stood there irresolute as to what course to pursue, and looking into the young girl's pleading eyes, with a hungry longing to clasp her to his heart, and hold her there always.

"Pansey, dear, you need not be afraid of Miss Helen, I will protect you in the face of anybody and everybody, if it is necessary. No harm shall come to you when I am near to shield you from it."

The earnest pathos which he put into those hurried words, frightened Pansey even more than the thought of a scolding from the imperious Helen. He had called her "Pansey, dear." How dreadful it was for an engaged young man to do that! What was she to do, but follow him and that fatal box on to destruction; as she thought going into the presence of Helen with Jasper for her companion and burden-bearer, certainly would be her destruction, morally, in the eyes of all the Dunn household. She had come to one of the hardest places in her hard life, poor girl! and there was no one near to advise her what to do. She pressed her hand tightly upon her throbbing

brow, and tried to think. Her brain was so confused that she could not frame an intelligent thought.

“Mr. Jasper! please stop!” she again called in desperation. “I cannot go in there with you! Oh, if you only knew the dreadful consequences, you would not dare to do it yourself!”

They had come to the steps now, and the trembling girl, plead and prayed and entreated that he would give her the box, and let her wait until such time as no suspicions would be aroused before going in.

But Jasper somehow felt that to do this would but be to make a sneak and coward of himself, and he was determined to brave it out. How little we know what the result of our actions will be! Perhaps what he did was best; and perhaps not. Certain it is, that it brought speedy and terrible trouble upon the young girl; and to himself, too, for that matter. For as things had turned, her trouble was doubly his own.

He turned quickly around at the sound of her pleading, trembling voice, and drank in another draught from her liquid eyes, which seemed to him like nectar fit for gods to sip; and then he placed his hand upon her trembling arm, and bade her dry her tears, and be a brave, good girl. “No harm shall come to you. If any one has to suffer for this act, it shall be myself, and not you, poor little Pansey. Take your handkerchief, dear, and dry your tears, and then follow me into the house. I will take the dress up to Miss Helen myself, and you need not go to her room if you do not wish to, and that will save all talk and trouble.”

But he was too late already to save that; for just as he ceased speaking, Mrs. Dunn and Helen came up the steps, and the latter had heard his last words. They had been out to select the flowers for the young lady's garniture that

evening, and ordered them sent around in time to have them looped amid her drapery.

He turned carelessly and boldly around to his mother and Helen, and said :

“I happened to meet little Pansey in the car coming up, and I have brought her box, that I believe contains your dress, Helen, from the car, which was so crowded she could not get inside with it.”

Pansey stood like a culprit, not daring to say a word, and feeling as if she wished the earth might open and swallow her up out of sight and hearing of everybody.

“Why, you poor child ! you must be very cold and tired, after coming up in those miserable crowded cars, and having to stand all the way,” spoke Mrs. Dunn.

“Don’t waste your sympathy on that bold creature, mamma ! She doubtless felt repaid by having such chivalric attention from this very loyal young gentleman,” and she flounced into the house, as the porter opened the door, and went upstairs to her room in a towering rage. Neither Jasper or his mother paid the slightest attention to this gust of temper and cutting sarcasm. Mrs. Dunn went into the parlor and Jasper followed her with the box. Pansey stood in the hall and waited for them to either dismiss her or ask her to take the dress up to Miss Helen’s room.

After Jasper had set the box down, he came back into the hall, and asked Pansey if she could stop to come in and rest a few moments. But she said she could not possibly. He went in the parlor again and whispered something to his mother which she did not hear ; then he came out, and said :

“Come, Pansey, I am going to take you to the car, and see if I cannot get you a seat, poor child ! you are all tired out, and I fear you will be ill after this shock upon your fragile strength.”

Mrs. Dunn bade her a kind good-night, and she went out with the young man, who, when they had reached the steps, put her little hand through the crook of his gallant arm, and escorted her to the car, as if she had been a countess instead of an errand girl. The cars going down town were not crowded at that time, and so he found her a seat, and after pressing her little hand warmly, and reassuring her that no harm should come to her from this night's adventure, he bade her good-night, and turned homeward to prepare for the reception.

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Let us follow Pansey home, and learn, if we can, what her thoughts are as she sits crouched in the seat where Jasper placed her, as if nailed to it. Her little dimpled chin quivers with mortification, and the tears will force themselves into her pathetic eyes, in spite of all her efforts to keep them back. It is such a sad ending of the long, hard day. She had worked on that dress with such interest and zeal; going without her lunch uncomplainingly, and had been ready to run of errands at every beck and call of the dressmaker and the two seamstresses! She had had ears and eyes, hands and feet, for the many calls upon them, that long, tiresome day; and this was the end of it all! She began to feel that life was too hard to bear, and she longed to get home, out of the sight of strange faces around her, and escape the stare of strange eyes, which seemed glaring at her tearful face from all sides in the car. Finally she felt that she could endure this prying curiosity no longer, and she motioned for the conductor to stop the car, and let her get out. She plunged from the steps into the street, and hurried on, her heart thumping like the beating of a drum against her close fitting walking coat. It was considerably past eight when she reached the house, and as she entered with her key the cheerful hallway, a

great sense of relief came to her burdened spirits. She heard excited talking and laughing in the workroom, and among the other voices she recognized Miss Forbes', assuring Guy that he "looked just like Prince Arthur, in that dress suit." She tried to compose herself and conceal all traces of excitement and worry from her face and manner; and after she thought she had succeeded in putting on a smiling face, she entered the room.

"Why, Pansey, child! how tired and pale you look! I fear you have been over-taxed to-day, poor dear! You have worked so hard all day and went without your lunch, too! I will never let you do it again, if I have to disappoint my best customer!" and Mrs. Withington took the weary and disheartened girl in her arms and caressed her as she would have an infant.

This sudden burst of love and sympathy caused the wronged and misjudged Pansey to break down ignominiously, and she sobbed out her heart-breaking experience with Helen Dunn that evening, upon the good woman's bosom. Guy came and stood over her, his great pitying eyes moist with manly tears, trying to console her passionate grief; and Miss Forbes stood by, as if struck dumb, respectfully keeping her lips closed, and wondering at such an exhibition of emotion in the errand girl.

But it was time for Guy to go now, and so he must leave his dear little friend in tears, for it seemed as if a reservoir of saline crystals had given way in the girl's head, and must have vent. But first he went to his room, and brought the little gift he had purchased for Pansey that evening, and which he promised her she should have when she returned from Major Dunn's. It was a bunch of exquisite pansies, and as he handed them to her, she burst out afresh, as if some cruel weapon had struck the old wound. But she took the lovely blossoms and caressed

them in her tapering, restless fingers, and thanked him as well as she could, through her sobs and tears. Then he took out a daintily embroidered handkerchief with the name "Guy" wrought in blue silk in one corner, and told the young girl it was the most treasured gift he had ever received. It was found by him on opening the box wrapped in white paper, which Pansey handed him when she left the house that night to convey Helen Dunn her costume. She had embroidered this name herself for him, and had planned to finish it by working on it at night after she went to her room, so he could have it for the reception. Guy Hurlbert appreciated this thoughtfulness and self-sacrificing work from Pansey, for he was as tender as a woman in his nature, although a strong, decided and manly man.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE VANDERWATER BALL.

Carriage after carriage rolled up to the Vanderwater mansion, and nimble footmen jumped from their boxes, handing daintily gloved and slippered ladies to the liveried house servants, who conducted them over the carpeted sidewalk up the broad steps and to their dressing-rooms. Every window was ablaze with light. The odor of rare exotics filled the warm atmosphere with subtle fragrance. The music of a popular orchestra throbbed with grand, inspiring pulsations. Mocking-birds, orioles and canaries warbled and trilled forth their sweet notes. Eyes sparkled, diamonds flashed, fans fluttered, and the rustle of silks and satin trains, sweeping over the stairs and through the spa-

cious hallways, mingled with the general clamor of music, song of birds, and the hum of voices.

Major Dunn's carriage drives up, and the footman opens the door of the drag. The major alights with considerable bluster, squeezed tightly into a full dress suit, and wearing a clerical looking necktie, fastened firmly around his puffy throat. He steps one side, and waits for his family to emerge from their wrappings amid the fur robes. First comes Mrs. Dunn, clad in long fur cloak, with a light worsted hood over her shining puffs of brown hair, and takes her place beside her liege lord. Then comes Lady Helen, pale and defiant, the footman holding aloft her ponderous train, her eyes bright, but as cold as an Arctic iceberg. And, last of all, follows Jasper, with a warm light in his handsome eyes, kindled by other feminine loveliness than that possessed by the proud belle he escorts with such well-bred courtesy and gallantry to this grand ball.

Together, this family, with hearts as widely separated as the poles, and each thinking their own thoughts, mount the stone steps, which the soft Turkish rug has robbed of its coldness and hardness, as charity robs the human heart of those stern qualities.

Later came the Fairweathers. But there are only three in this carriage. The junior partner of that great banking-house is a widower, and has been for the last ten years. He hands out Miss Florence to the respectful footman; then he follows, with a calm and cheerful face. He turns and waits for Guy, who, with native grace and politeness of the heart, offers Florence his arm; while her father takes the other, and minus the aid of a footman to hold her train, they pass up the steps without ostentation, and enter the brilliant interior. Miss Faithweather's chaperone is to meet her there, as she had to matronize another party of

young ladies, who had no one to take them there except her, and Florence was well protected by her father.

The earl was expected to arrive at about eleven o'clock, and many were the graceful necks craned through the surging crowd, to watch for his ascent of the hall stairs to the special coat-room provided for his earlship and party.

At last the cathedral clock upon the heavily draped mantel in the long parlors tolled the hour of eleven ; and a few minutes later the earl's carriage made its appearance at the door. He alighted very much as any man would have done—prosaic as the truth may appear recorded !—and after waiting for the ladies and other gentlemen of his party, they were ushered in with great pomp and bluster by the corps of liveried servants. The ladies eagerly flocked to the hallway and covertly scanned each gentleman who passed up the stairs. But they all looked much the same, muffled to their eyes in heavy overcoats.

Perhaps it would have been an act of philanthropy on the earl's part to have had his title written on his opera hat in gold letters. But the inconsiderate Englishman had garbed himself, so far as outside trappings are concerned, precisely like American society gentlemen.

They waited around the doors for his advent among them with what semblance of patience they could command. At length a tall and handsome gentleman came slowly down over the stairs, behind a beautiful young lady arrayed in gleaming white satin and pearl beaded lace drapery ; and following him, an elderly man, wearing a serene countenance.

“There he comes !” “That must be he !” softly chorused a score of feminine voices, and every eye was turned in admiration upon the handsome gentleman. There was a flutter of excitement among the young ladies, and an expectant look upon the faces of the dowagers as

the three entered the room. The elder gentleman and young lady were recognized by the hostess, who, after greeting them, waited to be presented to the supposed earl.

"Mrs. Vandewater, our hostess, Mr. Rumford."

The lady gave a surprised little shrug of her shoulders, which she intended to be very Frenchy, and asked in an under tone why he had omitted the title in presenting the earl; for this dowager supposed Guy Hurlbert none other than this much talked of lion. Nor did she even know who was to accompany him to her house. She had not long been accustomed to upper-ten society. A few years previous, the Vandewaters were among the common herd of "toilers and moilers." Stocks and bonds, and paying railroad schemes, had placed this family in their present social position. This unlettered Mrs. Shoddy would not have discerned the difference between Mike Malony, grown suddenly rich and rigged up in society toggery, from the proudest prince or earl in the United Kingdom of Britain. Therefore it is no marvel that she mistook Guy Hurlbert for the Earl of Rumford. Mr. Fairweather, with an amused smile, corrected the little social blunder, which correction was passed from lip to lip in the circle of ladies waiting to be presented to the earl, and a general scattering and scrabbling for the hallway, where he would be sure to pass, was the result.

At length, the real earl was announced, with considerable *eclat*; and the flutter and agitation among the ladies became epidemic.

"How perfectly splendid he is!" says one, catching her breath.

"No one could mistake him for any but an English peer!" adds another.

"He is *so* distingue!" puts in a third.

Perhaps no young lady at this grand reception was more cool and self-possessed than Helen Dunn, when, among the

first, she was presented to his earlship. She made no sign that it was anything more than an everyday occurrence to mingle in the society of English nobility.

During the initiation of this honored guest into New York fashionable society, Guy Hurlbert and Florence Fairweather were wandering around the art gallery, and enjoying the study of the great masters together.

"I am so glad to get away from the necessity of an introduction to the earl, Mr. Rumford. That was the reason I asked you to take me in here. It is such a bore to talk to people to whom you have nothing to say, and if you had, wouldn't dare say it. But perhaps it was selfish in me to take you away from that charmed circle!" and Florence Fairweather looked up in Guy's face with an arch smile, as much as to say "now is your chance to say something pretty about the pleasure of my society."

Poor Guy was much quicker to think, than to express his thoughts; and so he only replied that he had no desire to stay with the earl's party, and that it gave him pleasure to serve her in any possible way. If he had been a society young man, he would have most likely declared that it was "heaven to be in her presence," and all that sort of thing; which in reality it was to him, down deep beneath that diffidence and reserve which his prolonged battle with poverty had built like a wall around his emotional nature.

The young lady looked somewhat disappointed at Guy's apparent lack of feeling and appreciation of the sacrifice she had made in choosing to meander alone with him, instead of taking advantage of making the earl's acquaintance. It is a pity that we cannot sometimes read our companions hearts like an open book. Why is it, that two beings who are deeply in love with each other, are always misunderstanding one another's motives and misinterpreting their language?

Miss Fairwather made herself positively unhappy over a mere nothing, when it was analyzed. She imagined all sorts of impossibilities in regard to Guy's motives in saying this, or that, to her, instead of what she thought he would say if he cared for her as she did for him. As humiliating as the thought was, that she loved this poor young man without having any guarantee that it was reciprocated on his part, she could not crush it out. And then she would suddenly stand upon her dignity and assume a frigid manner toward this unsuspecting youth, until he began to feel that he had made a mistake as to the cordiality of her invitation for him to accompany them to the reception. He grew very uneasy, and asked if she would like to be escorted back to the drawing-room, where the sound of revelry seemed to be approaching its height.

As he ceased speaking, Jasper entered the gallery alone, wearing an expression of unrest, and as Guy thought, unhappiness. He passed them with a bow of recognition, and commenced a survey of the superb paintings. He seemed absorbed in the works of art before him, and did not notice that his mother and Helen were in the room, escorted by the earl. Miss Dunn swept past Florence and Guy with a slight bow of recognition, and the party went to another part of the gallery.

Guy wondered if Jasper's look of disappointment and unrest had anything to do with Helen's being escorted by the earl, instead of himself, around the art gallery. But Jasper cared much less who escorted Helen Dunn than he supposed. And so the drama went on, under masque, until it was the hour for breaking up, or ringing down the curtain. Jasper with all the courtesy and grace of a society bred gentleman, gave Helen his arm, and carrying her bouquet and fan, conducted her to their carriage, all the while his thoughts running riot over Pansey Bloom,

the errand girl. While Guy Hurlbert, with a vague sense of having, in some mysterious way, offended the one woman he most cared to please, wearing a solemn countenance,—which would seem more appropriate for a funeral than a ball,—led Miss Fairweather to the ladies' dressing-room, and went for his coat and hat.

As for the lady herself, life seemed a miserable farce, and Guy Hurlbert an unfathomable mystery, but a mystery in which her future happiness was seriously involved.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NEW TROUBLES.

Guy came home from the office the next evening earlier than usual, carrying the burden of a severe headache, added to a serious disturbance in the region of his heart.

"Where is Pansey, Auntie? I have a racking headache, and I am sure her little hands on my temples would relieve the pain," was the young man's salutation, as he entered the presence of his busily engaged aunt, and removed his overcoat, which appeared a burden too heavy for his strength.

"I have sent her up to Mrs. Dunn's with the remaining lace and ribbon belonging to Miss Helen. I forgot to put them in the box last night in my anxiety to get the dress to her in season," replied his aunt, looking anxiously at his tired, pale face. "But it is now time for her return."

"Do you know, Auntie, I think we should be very

lonely without Pansey ? She is such a sweet, gentle little creature. It seems as if I had known her all my life."

"I feel the same myself, Guy. She is, indeed, lovable. I hope she can relieve your head, my boy," continued the dressmaker, as if she had suddenly recollected the cause of Guy's early appearance home that night. "It was the late hours and the excitement of the reception, doubtless, that has caused your headache."

"Very likely ; it doesn't agree with me to dissipate. I am glad I do not have to go to a Vanderwater ball every week. I cannot imagine how society young men endure late hours as well as they do. It would unfit me for business altogether."

"I suppose society young men, as a rule, are not tied up to regular business hours, Guy ; and then they become hardened to dissipation after a while, probably."

"Perhaps they do. But you would be surprised to know the number of young clerks, on smaller salaries than mine even, who attend most of the fashionable balls, besides theatre and opera four nights in a week, during the gay season. I cannot conceive how they get the money, in the first place, nor can I understand what keeps them from breaking down altogether. I should not care to trifle thus with my health."

"But you enjoyed the reception last evening, did you not, Guy ?"

"Yes, Auntie ; in a degree."

"I should not mind seeing that brilliant affair myself. There must have been a wilderness of elegant costumes and diamonds. Do tell me how Miss Helen looked in her dress ! I suppose you saw her, did you not ?"

"Oh, yes. Her costume was superb, and becoming ; far more attractive to me than her face ; although it may be very ungallant for me to say so. She looked as cold as

an arctic iceberg, and as brilliant as the evening star ; and that is about all that one who looks beyond chiselled features and graceful carriage can say of her," continued Guy, with an oratorical flourish worthy of a lyceum lecturer.

"I suppose the earl was the lion of the evening, since none of the ladies present were titled."

"Yes ; he was the loadstone after it was discovered that I was not the earl. There was a singular blunder made when I was introduced as Mr. Rumford. The hostess mistook me for the lion of the party. When the mistake was corrected by Mr. Fairweather, who presented me, there was quite an amusing scattering among the ladies who had surrounded us."

"Well, there is no doubt in my mind but that you are just as good as the earl, and probably much better looking—since you have youth in your favor—although it is said that the present earl is but little over forty ; but some say, not very well preserved."

"To change the subject, Auntie, you remember that night I told you about losing my banking-house keys, I suppose !"

"Yes ; I remember, Guy ; but what of it ?"

"Well, I found them under a pile of books on my desk to-day ; and I thought I had hunted everything over a dozen times or more. It is very singular ! It almost seems as if some one had put them there after our search the day I missed them. It is a very annoying incident to me ; and the more I think of it, the more so it seems."

As he finished speaking, the door opened, and Pansey entered in remarkably good spirits, and walking with elastic step over to the sewing machine, she placed the hand-satchel upon it, and then turned around and greeted Guy cheerfully, saying he "looked a little dull and pale to-night."

"There is a good reason for my dullness and pallor, Pansey. I am so glad you have come! I am tortured with a racking headache. It takes your little hands, after all, to relieve aches and pains in the head."

"How about the heartache, Mr. Guy?" retorted the young girl, quickly. "It would require one more used to it than I am, to cure such pain I suppose."

"I am not so sure of that, either! One might go further, and fare much worse."

"Well, child! you seem in better spirits than you did last night on your return from Major Dunn's. I am glad to see you more cheerful!" and Mrs. Withington patted her dimpled cheek tenderly.

"Oh, yes, Auntie. Miss Helen was real nice and kind to me. She showed me her beautiful diamond ring with two pink pearls in the center. Oh it was such a beauty."

"Was it on her finger, Pansey?" asked the dressmaker.

"No, mam. It was in a handsome plush case with a diamond pin. She had just finished dressing when I got there, she told me, and had not put on her jewels."

"She can not be a superstitious young lady, then. It is considered an omen of ill luck to take off an engagement ring, I have heard. That diamond and pink pearl is her engagement ring, I think Miss Forbes said," spoke Guy.

"Yes; she told me that Mr. Jasper Montrose gave it to her when they were engaged, and they were out upon a rock in the bay down at Mount Desert. She said they were surrounded by the tide, and would have been lost, only that Mrs. Dunn came to them in a row boat, and saved them just in time," prattled Pansey, breathlessly; standing meanwhile beside Guy's chair, and manipulating his throbbing brow with her soft little hands.

"It seems to me Miss Helen has become suddenly confidential with you, child, after her ill-treatment of last

night, too ;” and Mrs. Withington folded up her work to prepare for dinner,

“ Oh, it is so nice to have such beautiful things as Miss Helen has. I wish I could have such a lovely diamond ring as her’s, and be rich, and go to grand parties ! But I don’t suppose I ever shall ;” and Pansey fluttered about in such an excited manner that both Guy and his aunt were taken by surprise.

“ I should rather have your disposition and humble lot in life, Pansey, than Helen Dunn’s, and her wealth. You will get far more real enjoyment out of life than she will, I am sure.”

“ I am glad you think so, Mr. Guy ; but I fear my disposition is not so good as you imagine. Sometimes I feel real wicked and rebellious. I did last night when I came home in that dreadful car, and all the passengers stared so at me, because I could not help crying at Miss Helen’s cruel words to Mrs. Dunn about me. But Mr. Jasper was very kind ; indeed he was ; to go and put me in the car after all Miss Helen had said.”

As Pansey ceased speaking, there came a sharp stroke upon the bell, and she went to answer it. Miss Forbes stood upon the stoop, and close behind her, was a tall, sinewy man, muffled in a heavy overcoat.

“ Is this gentleman with you, Miss Forbes ?” asked Pansey, in an undertone.

“ Oh, no, child. I never have escorts.”

By this time, the man had reached the door, and inquired if this was Mrs. Withington’s house.

Miss Forbes answered up herself, for Pansey seemed confused and agitated, the spinster thought.

“ Yes, sir ; this is Mrs. Withington’s house. Do you want to see her ?”

“ Yes, mam ; for a few minutes.”

By this time, Pansey had found her tongue, and she asked in a low voice, which still had a slight tremor in its tones :

“ Will you walk in the reception room, sir, and send in your name ?” at the same time leading the way to that small room.

“ No matter about the name, girl ; I only want to see her a few minutes on business, tell her,” and the man settled himself in an easy chair, and unbuttoned his overcoat, revealing a row of brass buttons on his inside coat.

Pansey, although considerably alarmed at this exhibition, and wondering what an officer of the law could want of her “ Auntie,” went quickly to the dining-room, where Miss Forbes had already told the news to the dressmaker, before knowing that he was an officer.

The amazed Mrs. Withington smoothed out her violet satin cap ribbons, and went in to meet her caller.

“ You wished to see me, sir ?” and she turned the gas on from its faint glimmer to a full blaze, meanwhile scanning the face of her strange visitor.

“ I’ve called on rather unpleasant business, mam,” at length he spoke, twisting his stout thumbs over each other in an idle, careless fashion.

“ Unpleasant business, did you say ?” repeated his astonished listener.

“ Yes, mam. But it’s nothin’ that very much concerns you, either. You’ve got an errand girl, I understand, mam, what is named Pansey.”

“ Yes, sir ;” staring at him blankly.

“ She’s just come from Major Dunn’s house, too, hain’t she ?”

“ Yes, sir,” again, more mystified than before.

“ Did she bring a small hand satchel with her, mam ?”

“ She did, sir ! a satchel of mine, in which she took

home some lace and ribbons to Miss Helen Dunn!" explained the now perplexed and irritated woman. "Is there anything very remarkable in that fact, sir?" bristling up a little hotly, and turning uneasily in her chair, as if she would give her visitor to understand his call had been quite long enough already. But he took no notice of this uneasiness, apparently.

"I wish to see this young errand girl, mam, and also the satchel she brought home!" and he threw back his coat and revealed a detective's full uniform.

"I call this the height of impertinence, in a respectable lady's house, sir! By what authority do you come here to search my errand girl's satchel?" and she stood up, trembling and defiant, and looked the officer full in the face.

"By *this* authority, mam!" and he smote upon the brass buttons, and produced a paper for the arrest of the errand girl, Pansey Bloom, charged with stealing a pearl and diamond ring from Miss Helen Dunn, while in her room that evening.

Mrs. Withington gave a frightful shriek, and dropped into the chair, from which she had just arisen. By this time Miss Forbes, Guy and Pansey were upon the scene of confusion.

"What is it?" they all gasped in a breath.

The officer, being the only clear-headed one among them, just then, replied:

"I am here for the arrest of one Pansey Bloom, this dressmaker's errand girl, charged with the theft of a pearl and diamond ring from Miss Helen Dunn."

"*Theft*, sir! did you say *thief*?" demanded Guy.

Theft! *thief*?" repeated the agitated spinster. "*That* is impossible!"

"Don't be too sure, mam, till search has been

made," coolly retorted the officer, as if he was pretty certain of his victim.

"Where do you wish to search, sir? You had better commence at once, and be done with it!" exclaimed Guy.

"I am ready now, then, if you will produce a certain satchel the girl carried up and brought back from Miss Dunn's room to-night. If she hain't taken it out yet, I suppose I'll find it in there, securely hid away. Is *this* the girl?" he asked, looking at the frightened Pansey, who had turned as colorless as a piece of white marble.

"This is my aunt's errand girl, and her name is Pansey Bloom, and she has just come from Miss Dunn's, with the satchel you mention; and, of course, you can search it and satisfy yourself that there has been a great mistake made in some way. Where is the satchel, Pansey, dear?" and Guy strode over, and lifted the half-fainting girl from an ottoman upon which she was crouched, trembling and helpless with terror.

"There's a satchel on the sewin' machine!" volunteered Miss Forbes. "Is that the one you fetched home Pansey?"

Pansey bowed assent, still as helpless as an infant, and her teeth chattering as if overtaken by an ague fit.

The detective followed Miss Forbes and Guy out into the dining-room, and the terror stricken Pansey and Mrs. Withington sat still in their seats, as if utterly powerless to move.

"Here is the satchel," and Guy passed it to the officer, telling him to "search it all he wished," adding: "We have no criminal mysteries in this house, thank Heaven!"

The dressmaker and Pansey now appeared at the door, both as white as spectres, and Pansey's dry eyes glaring like burning coals upon the officer. There was a breath-

less suspense with all those in the room, as they watched the officer open the satchel and look inside. Then he put his monstrous hand down into its depths, and took out the fatal pearl and diamond ring, and held it up to the waiting witnesses.

"Heaven help us all !" ejaculated Mrs. Withington.

"There is some dreadful mistake !" gasped Guy, white and rigid, glaring first at the ring, then at the officer, and next at Pansey.

"Evidently the *mistake* has been made by the errand girl, judging from her looks and actions, which is generally pretty fair judgment," retorted the detective, with a cold sneer. "I've seen hundreds of jest such cases. These unknown waifs are found out to be all alike in the end, and all kind folk's trouble and pains is throwd away on 'em."

"Pansey, can you not speak for yourself, poor bird ? Can you not tell this man that you are innocent of the crime of which he accuses you. Do not be so frightened, speak up and never fear. You shall not be harmed while I am here to protect you !" and Guy took her cold and limp hand in his, and knelt before her in an agony of suspense.

At last she broke forth in a strange, unnatural voice, husky and trembling.

"I don't think I could have taken that ring," and pressing her hands tightly upon her icy forehead, she cried out in despair : "Oh, I feel so strange in *here*," pressing her hand still harder upon her forehead.

"There is no use of fooling around here with this girl any longer. There's no doubt about her guilt, and all this pretense at being so shocked may as well be stopped now as any time. The girl has got to go to the station-house with me, and the quicker you all make up your minds to

that fact, the sooner the troublesome affair will be over," and the officer put his rough hand on Pansey's arm, and commanded her to "stand up, and take the consequences of her theft, sensibly."

Guy drew back with clenched fist, white with rage, and was on the point of striking the officer in the face. But Miss Forbes stepped between them, and averted the blow.

"That won't do, Guy! the officer must do his duty,—as he supposes arresting Pansey's his duty,—but there's no need for such brutal talk to the poor thing."

For the first time in his life to a human being, Guy pushed Miss Forbes fiercely from him, saying :

"Do you think I shall stand here and see that innocent girl falsely accused of theft and dragged off to the station-house without protesting against it? What material could I be made of and do that?" and he gnashed his teeth with righteous indignation.

"But it is useless to protest whether the young girl's innocent or guilty, I shall have to obey the requirements of law. The property is found in her possession, and she has not positively denied the theft. I don't want to do nothing rough or cruel, sir; but it can't be helped, as I see."

The officer had toned down in his brutal language, seeing the helpless girl had a brave and determined defender.

Pansey sat in a low chair, rocking to and fro, and moaning piteously. She was draining the cup of bitterness to its very dregs now, and every one in the room, the officer included, stood looking on with awe and respectful silence.

At length she arose and tottered to Mrs. Withington, standing before her, silent and tearless, for a moment.

“They say I am a thief, Auntie, and must go to the station-house. I will go without resistance, for all your sakes. Good-bye! if I never see you again you have all been good to me.”

She went over to the officer, white and trembling, and said she was ready to go with him, begging that he would take her away at once.

The man was staggered. He had never met with such a case as this before, and her pale, beautiful face had somewhat melted his hard heart. Her hat and cloak were still on, and she had not yet eaten dinner. But that mattered little. She could not have forced herself to eat a morsel, if her life had depended upon it. Guy went to her and folded her in his arms convulsively, pressing a kiss upon her cold, quivering lips; then he turned and left the room, and fled upstairs to his chamber.

The two women embraced her silently, with a sorrow far beyond expression by words or tears; and the officer took the little satchel, placed the ring back inside, and conducted Pansey out into the cold, crisp night.

* * * * *

There was a walk of half-a-mile to the station-house, toward which the officer was taking Pansey. It was a tedious walk, and the young girl's feet were like lumps of ice, and her knees shook and trembled so that it seemed as if she could scarcely stand. Neither spoke a word during that seemingly endless walk, and when at last they reached their destination, the terrified girl wished the journey hither had been even longer. It was a dismal-looking place, as all such houses are. They entered the long, gloomy corridor and walked to the further end of it, and into the jailer's room. This was stifling with pipe smoke, and smelt almost as vile as a cage for wild beasts.

“A new bird for one of the cages, Jim,” spoke the

detective, and he handed Pansey over to the custody of the disgusting and gross turnkey.

"A fine, feathered bird, too, eh ! Bill ? Looks as though she belonged in a gilded cage ! I'll see what I can do for her, Bill ! Come on, miss, and I'll show you to a room ;" and the brute took roughly hold of Pansey's arm, and pulled her along through the dimly-lighted corridors, opened one of the cells and pushed her inside, asking if she had been to dinner, and if not, "should he bring her quail on toast and a bottle of wine ?"

Pansey dropped down with a thud upon the hard seat by the door of the cell, and deigned no reply to this impudent question. Perhaps she had not even heard it, for she felt as if her reason were leaving her, and rough or courteous language was about the same to her then. Nothing could give her additional pain or misery. She felt as if turned to stone, and she did not notice how cold her feet were, or how vile the atmosphere was in that dismal cell ; nor yet did she heed the mumblings of drunken prisoners, or the frightful oaths of men and women who were being pushed into cells around her, and who had been gathered from the lowest and vilest dens of iniquity in the city.

At length a drowsiness stole over her benumbed senses, and she lost consciousness in sleep. She dreamed that Jasper came and lifted her in his arms, and carried her out of that dismal place into a beautiful green lawn, where warm breezes blew upon her cheek, laden with perfume. And then he took the glittering ring, kissed it, and slipped it upon her finger, saying : "You shall be my Pansey forever."

With this she awoke, and remembering where she was, shrieked aloud in her despair and helplessness.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FOUR SCENES.

SCENE FIRST.—It is eight o'clock in the morning. The snow is falling thick and fast, sifting lightly down upon the station-house. No ray of light reaches Pansey's dismal cell, except the pale glimmer from the long corridor, which falls upon her frightened face through the grating.

The jail keeper comes heavily over the stone floor, turns the key in the monstrous lock and opens the door. He has the prisoner's breakfast, such as it is, served in a tin dish, and a mug of something by courtesy called coffee. He hands it in to her, saying: "Well, did you enjoy a comfortable night, pretty bird?"

Pansey gazed at him stolidly, but could make no sound in reply.

"There's your breakfast, miss. Why don't you say somethin'? Are you deaf and dumb? You had better eat your breakfast, for you'll be wanted in the court-room in a couple of hours. The court sets at ten, and your case may be the first one called. What do you set there and stare at me in that dumb and sassy way for, girl? I shouldn't think you'd ever been in a station-house in your life, by the way you act!"

All this gabbling from the man was as Greek to Pansey. She did not even know that it was morning, nor that she had to appear in court when it was morning. The night seemed like one long continued and never ending nightmare to her.

"Come ; why don't you go to eatin', girl ? You'll need it before noon, I can tell you."

"I do not wish the food ; take it away, please," and Pansey closed her eyes, and turned her head away from the disgusting man. He obeyed, without making any more useless talk ; and again slamming the iron door, he locked it, and carried the food intended for Pansey to the next occupied cell, where he found a more hungry and talkative prisoner.

After he had gone, she aroused from her frightful stupor and began to try to think over all that had occurred since she left Helen Dunn's chamber the night before. One by one the dreadful situations crowded upon her dazed brain. The entrance of the detective at the house ; the frightful shriek, heard from her "Auntie" in the next room ; the charge of theft upon her by the officer ; Guy's clenched fist, and face white with suppressed rage ; the sparkling ring held up to view as a silent witness against her ; Mrs. Withington's cry of "Heaven help us all !" Guy's groan that "there must be some dreadful mistake ;" his call upon her to assert her innocence ; and her own stupid and condemning reply : "I do not think I could have taken that ring !" and then her good-byes to them all, and Guy's passionate, convulsive embrace and fervent kiss upon her cold, colorless lips ; the long hard walk to the station-house ; the smiting together of her knees ; and last of all, being pushed into that cell, and her strange dream of Jasper.

She sat with folded hands and closed eyes, attempting to raise her voice in supplication to the Almighty—the God of the fatherless and friendless—that he would look down upon her in this hour of helplessness, and save her from this dreadful disgrace and ruin. Then the hot tears dropped upon her pale cheeks and relieved her parched

and burning eyelids. Her face grew serene, and wore a sweet and peaceful look, like one who had received a heavenly benediction. She sat still, with her eyes closed and the tears forcing their way through the lids, and falling upon her little folded hands. Her lips moved tremulously, and her whole attitude was one of prayer.

The sound of a key in the lock aroused her, and she sprang to her feet and faced the door. When it opened Jasper Montrose stood before her. She raised her eyes, bedewed with tears, to his wistful face, and thought she saw a vision from heaven; then fell fainting in his arms.

SCENE TWO.—There was a promiscuous herd of prisoners waiting in the police court dock two hours later. Bill Reilley was called up, charged with beating his wife, said wife being there with bandaged head to witness against him. He was sent to the island for two months, and the wife went out muttering, because the sentence had been so severe,—“just because he beat his own wife.”

Next came Madame Pachouli, who had been overhauled for keeping a disorderly and disreputable house, against whom some of her neighbors and the detectives appeared in accusation. Then came a poor wretch who had stolen a ham; which he said he had done to keep his wife and children from starvation. He was sent up for four months, as his crime was considered more heinous than the wife beater's or the woman who kept a disorderly house, which latter got clear by promising to vacate her present quarters.

Major Dunn had taken his granddaughter to the court room himself, as Jasper and his mother had refused to accompany her. Miss Forbes sat beside Mrs. Withington and Guy, each of them ready with aid and sympathy for the unfortunate girl, whom they loved, and in whom they firmly believed. The tender-hearted spinster had brought

money for Guy to offer as bail, without which she knew the poor girl would be committed to await her trial, if the owner of the ring appeared against her that morning. The court-room was packed with people, of one kind and another. The rich and poor, the respectable and degraded had assembled there for different purposes—some to claim stolen property, and others to avenge wrongs, either real or imaginary.

The clerk scanned his schedule, and there was a few minutes pause in the proceedings, during which interval ensued a low hum of voices and an uneasy wriggling in the uncomfortable seats.

A sharp rap sounded upon the desk, and all heads were turned again toward the bench.

“Pansey Bloom !” rang out upon the stillness. There was a rustle among the prisoners, and a policeman conducted the young girl, her face as white as the newly fallen snow upon the window sills, giving her eyes a deep purple hue in their alabaster frame work, to the side of the bench of justice.

The judge and the clerk and the waiting assemblage gazed upon her as if a pure white dove had fluttered down into the prisoners’ dock. The buzz and hum was for a moment beyond the control of the judge, and Pansey thought she was going to die. The searching gaze of all the spectators seemed to paralyze her, and the time which she stood and waited her fate seemed an eternity. She did not raise her eyes once during this critical moment, and there was a nervous tremulousness about her sensitive mouth that would have melted the hardest heart, even though she had been guilty of the gravest theft ever charged upon a prisoner in a police court.

The judge took up the glittering bauble and proceeded :

"The prisoner is charged with stealing this diamond and pearl ring. Who appears against her?"

Helen Dunn arose, flushed and excited, and said, in a husky voice :

"I do."

The ring was passed her for inspection.

"Is this your property, miss?"

"It is, sir!"

"Who found this ring in the possession of the prisoner?"

"I did, your honor!" and the detective stepped by the prisoner whom he had arrested the night before.

"I arrested her in one Mrs. Withington's house. The prisoner was her errand girl. It was in this satchel I found the ring about half-an-hour after she left the owner's room, your honor," producing the satchel with considerable bluster and pomposity.

The judge turned to the prisoner.

"Are you guilty of this charge, or not guilty?"

She hesitated a moment, looking first toward Helen Dunn, then at the judge, with quivering lips and dilated eyes.

"I do not think I am guilty, sir," and she fell to the floor, as if struck by a bolt of lightning.

The judge saw plainly that she was unaccustomed to a court-room, as even the manner in which she should have replied to his question of guilty or not guilty was Greek to her. It is safe to say that he considered this a very awkward case to manage. She was raised to her feet again by the detective, who dashed a shower of water upon her auburn hair; and in a few minutes the "court" proceeded.

"As this girl is not sure one way or the other about her guilt, she will be committed to jail, unless bail is offered for

her appearance on the date fixed for trial. Does any one present appear with the sum of one thousand dollars in her behalf?"

A young man arose in the rear of the court room, as the last words escaped the judge's lips.

"I, Jasper Montrose, volunteer to give bail for the prisoner."

There was a storm of applause from the audience, and then her deliverer and Guy met together by the dock to take the fainting girl away from those dreadful scenes. When Helen saw them by her side, she fell upon the floor at her grandfather's feet.

SCENE THREE.—It is evening, and the excited Mrs. Withington has just lighted the gas and turned it down to a faint glimmer in Pansey's room. She is tossing and moaning upon her pillows. The little city doctor is there, with his fingers on her fluttering pulse. Miss Forbes is down in the kitchen, making poultices over the range, and as she stirs the different mixtures, the briny drops fall upon the hissing stove covers. It seems to her beclouded brain as if the angel of death hovered around the house, impatient for admission.

It is nearly time for Guy to return from business; but the unconscious girl knows naught of time or coming and going around her couch. A little treasured trinket is under her pillow, for she has slept with this memento there since New Year's night.

Miss Forbes tiptoes into the room with poultices and beef broth, and tells Mrs. Withington she had better go down to dinner with Guy, as he has come home tired and ill and has to go back again as soon as dinner is over.

"Can you stay with the doctor while I go down to the

poor boy, then, Miss Forbes?" asks the nervous and agitated woman.

"Well, I should think I could do that much, on a pinch," replied the spinster. "If the doctor think's I'll do," she added, looking at the city doctor for the first time, as she had never been in her friend's house during any of his previous visits.

"Why, of course, he *knows* you will do, and probably do a great deal better than I can for the poor child. She is so very ill and delirious half of the time, I cannot seem to do scarcely anything to relieve her. Doctor, this is Miss Forbes; a faithful friend of little Pansey's."

The light was so dim that neither could see the other's face distinctly, and therefore the spinster did not notice the sudden start which the doctor gave at the mention of her name in the introduction. She went to Pansey's bedside, and laid her bony hand on her burning brow; and then turned and asked the doctor where to apply the poultices.

"Upon the back of the neck," ordered the doctor. "If anything will save her from a brain fever, that will; but I fear it is already too late to prevent the dreadful disease."

Miss Forbes turned the unconscious girl over upon one side to apply the poultice as directed; and after it was properly secured to her delicate skin, and snugly covered, she held her prostrate form against her shoulder, and tried to adjust her pillows in a more comfortable position for her weary, restless head. As she did so, something slipped from the under pillow, and fell upon the floor at the doctor's feet.

"Something fell down, doctor, didn't there? I thought I heard something drop," spoke the spinster, placing Pansey back gently upon the puffed up pillows,

which she had shaken until they were as light as eider-down.

The doctor stooped and picked up a locket. His curiosity moved him to open it, and look inside, for he thought there must be some likeness or lock of hair that the sick girl valued very highly, else she would not keep it under her pillows.

He arose, and went to the gas jet, and turned up the light, and looked upon the face of a handsome young woman. Then he turned it over, and touched the spring on the opposite side. He gazed upon it intently for a moment, and then exclaimed :

“My God ! It is Leonard Hurlbert !”

“Did you know Leonard Hurlbert, doctor ?” ejaculated Miss Forbes.

“I have seen him, madam ; but it was years ago, when I was a young man,” and the little doctor went back to his seat by the bed, and looked earnestly into the face of the sick girl. “Surely this must be Leonard’s daughter ! Yes ! Where have my eyes been all these months ?” he said to himself, still gazing upon her white face, from which the fitful fever turns had passed, leaving it more pallid than before. “Leonard Hurlbert’s daughter accused of theft, and unable to assert her innocence in the courtroom, too ! Leonard Hurlbert’s daughter a thief ? No, never ! God forbid that !” He was limping across the floor now in his excitement, all regardless of Miss Forbes’ presence, while she stood still and looked at him, as if she thought he was suddenly bereft of his senses, and might be a dangerous companion to be alone with.

“If this is Leonard Hurlbert’s daughter, then she is Guy’s own sister,” spoke Miss Forbes, half to herself and half to the agitated doctor, who was still pacing across the floor from the door to the bed.

“To Guy, did you say, madam? Is his name Guy Hurlbert? I never heard him called aught save Guy by his aunt or Pansey.”

“That is his name, doctor. Guy Hurlbert.”

The doctor still held the locket open, and every now and again looking upon the portrait.

“Leonard Hurlbert must have been a dear friend of yours, doctor. Was he the only one of the family you knew?”

“I knew his father and mother, madam.”

“Did you happen to know the oldest brother that died in a hospital from wounds received by bein’ crushed under the cars? John Hurlbert, doctor?” and the spinster’s voice trembled as if she were guilty of having a hand in his death.

“Yes, madam. I remember him, too! John Hurlbert. But did you know anything of him, madam?”

“Five and twenty years ago, I knew John Hurlbert, doctor.”

“It cannot be that this is the Miss Forbes who was once engaged to John Hurlbert; I saw her several times with him, and there is no resemblance between her and you, madam.”

“And yet I was once engaged to John Hurlbert, five and twenty years ago. It don’t seem long since then, either, and I was called good looking, then;—yes; five and twenty years ago! and I was engaged to John Hurlbert; and strong drink stood between me and all that was, or is, worth living for!” these last disconnected sentences were uttered low, to herself, and yet the little city doctor heard them all, and wondered.

A moan from Pansey brought them both to their feet, and they went to her side, and discovered that she seemed to be partially returning to consciousness.

“Nothing must be said to excite her now, Miss Forbes. She would most likely understand. It is the mustard poultice that has had the desired effect. It is drawing the disease from her head.” They succeeded in making her swallow some beef tea, and her medicine; and when this was done, and they again sat down, Guy came up stairs, crept softly into the room, and over to the bed.

“How is she to-night, doctor? Auntie tells me she is very ill, poor dear.”

“I hope she will be better in the morning with careful nursing, such as our good friend here will give her through the night,” and a tear glistened in the kind little man’s eye.

“I came up to look at her a moment before I went back to the office. The cashier and I are obliged to work awhile this evening. Auntie asked me to tell you she would be up soon to relieve you, and let you go down to dinner, Miss Forbes,” and after stooping to kiss Pansey’s feverish lips, he turned, and went out, bidding them good-night.

The doctor gave Pansey’s watcher for the night careful directions regarding medicine and nourishment, and left, to return as early as possible again in the morning. But there were many calls at this season of the year upon this little city doctor; for diptheria, colds and pneumonia were very prevalent among the poorer classes of patients, to which he administered. Then Mrs. Withington came and took the excited spinster’s place, while she went to dinner.

SCENE FOUR.—The drawing-room at Major Dunn’s residence is a scene of confusion and conflicting emotions. The entire family is gathered there, and it seems to be a “house divided against itself.”

“So, young man, you have made a jackass of yourself, so to speak, and given bail to a sneak thief, who has stolen

your betrothed's engagement ring. A fine use you have made of your money as soon as it has come into your possession," and Major Dunn smote his heavy fist upon the arm of his chair, by way of giving emphasis to his cutting words.

"My money would not be my own, if I could not invest it as I saw fit, sir. I do not choose to call the young girl for whom I gave bail this morning a thief."

"What, then, do you call her, may I inquire?"

"A much aggrieved and innocent young person, sir, whom I think guilty of no crime but being penniless and an orphan."

"I suppose you hear your intended husband's language, Helen?"

"Yes, papa," languidly, and with a show of being injured beyond repair to the heart's core.

"Have you nothing more to say about this disgraceful affair, young lady? Can you not protest against such insane folly on the part of your betrothed husband?"

"I fear it must be all over between Jasper and me, as things have turned. It is no small matter for an engaged young man to become the champion of a thieving girl, whose origin no one knows, and probably if it were known, would be found to be the lowest and most degraded in New York;" and she writhed in her venomous wrath.

Mrs. Dunn sat speechless, her hands folded across her lap, as limp as if she were powerless to raise them. No appeal was made to her, whatever, as none appeared necessary to her husband or Helen; and Jasper was past talking calmly. But the kind little woman's sympathies were given, mentally, to the accused young girl.

Jasper arose and paced the floor rapidly.

"Can you not compose yourself, Jasper, and sit, instead of walking the floor in that frenzied manner. You make

me nervous !” and the young lady gave a short, hysterical laugh.

He went over to his betrothed, scanning her face with a look of perplexed anxiety in his handsome, true eyes.

“Do you desire our engagement cancelled, Helen, because I have befriended this innocent girl, as I believe her to be ?”

“I have not said so yet, Jasper. There is always a chance for repentance. When you acknowledge your folly, I might be induced to forgive you.”

“If that is the penalty required on my part for your favor, I shall never be forgiven in this world !” and he dropped into a chair, overcome with his strong emotions.

“You cannot stay under my roof, then, if that is your decision. By what mysterious power do you imagine that ring got in the errand girl’s satchel ?” questioned the major, white and red by turns with the rage burning within him.

“I could not even guess, sir ! It might have been the merest accident that it fell in that fatal spot. Stranger things than that have happened ! Whatever the mystery is, I shall never rest, day or night, until it is explained. And Heaven forbid that it shall remain a mystery long. Whatever happens I shall always believe her innocent of theft.”

He arose once more, and walked the floor. Then he went to his mother and put out his hand to her, saying, in a choked and husky voice :

“Mother, I must leave you now, to seek a stopping place in some hotel. I cannot stay under my stepfather’s roof, and sit at the table with him, beneath the bann of his displeasure ; and he has said I cannot stay, too, with my present belief and practice about the young girl I have undertaken to defend ; and Helen has said I could no longer be her betrothed, unless I repented my folly and

turned my back upon this helpless orphan ;” turning to his fiancé with staring eyes, and a face white and rigid.

She cowered under these burning words, as if half ashamed of her cruel upbraidings of the young girl, whom, it was possible, might be the victim to some fatal accident of the ring’s slipping in the bag without the agency of hands at all. She stirred uneasily in her chair, and then asked Jasper to assist her to her room, for she could not see, and thought she must be on the verge of fainting ; and he carried her in his arms, a limp and swooning burden, followed by his mother and stepfather, to her room.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A MYSTERIOUS MURDER.

It was morning again. The sun was shining upon the blinding, dazzling whiteness of the newly fallen snow. Pansey was more quiet, but in a sort of stupor from the opiates which had been given to ease the racking pain in her head. Guy lay in the next room to her’s, himself unable to rise. He had been over-taxed bodily and mentally, and came home last night with the same kind of a headache he had the night of Pansey’s arrest, and the excitement and strain upon his nerves, added to his business perplexities, had overpowered him.

The doctor was again at Pansey’s bedside, while Miss Forbes had gone below to snatch a short sleep. The kind soul had watched all night, first over Pansey and then Guy, as he came from his evening’s additional work barely able to stand upon his feet, and Miss Forbes listened to his

stified groans, until she could no longer refrain from going to his relief.

After the doctor came he administered a powerful sedative, which threw him into a restless sleep—a sleep which, in most instances, exhausts and weakens, instead of refreshing and strengthening.

The doctor had been up nearly all the previous night himself, and needed to go to his room and get some rest. But he neglected no known duty to those who depended on his professional services, and as Pansey was quiet, and unconscious, he left her for a few minutes, and went into Guy's room. He sat down by his bed and watched the nervous working of his troubled face; the while wondering why he had never before noticed the resemblance between him and Pansey. It seemed so very marked now, that he wondered Mrs. Withington had never noticed it.

“Leonard Hurlbert's son and daughter, and I here administering to them in a professional way! Am I losing my reason? or is this reality?” he asked himself, half aloud. But his audible reverie was cut short by the entrance of Mrs. Withington, who wondered if the strange little doctor had a habit of talking to himself, with all his other peculiarities.

He arose, and gave the tired woman his seat by the bed, and went over toward the window. Something arrested his attention beside the bureau, and he stopped to look at it more critically. It was the old chest of drawers which had once been Leonard Hurlbert's mother's. He remembered having seen it before, but he made no remark to the anxious woman, who sat beside her nephew with sorrowful face and red, swollen eyes. He turned to the dressmaker, at length, and said he should be obliged to go home to get a little sleep, preparatory to going his daily rounds among

his city patients, adding that he would "come again in the evening."

"Is the poor boy going to have a fever, doctor?" she asked.

"I trust not, madam. It is only the effects of over work, and the strain upon his nerves and brain which the dreadful occurrence of yesterday and the night before last has caused, I think. However, he must be carefully watched and nursed, till he is past danger of a fever."

Mrs. Withington turned again to her sick nephew, and the doctor silently slipped out, and hastened home.

Miss Forbes slept on so soundly that it would seem even an earthquake would fail to arouse her, and the weary dressmaker kept vigil alone over the two sick ones. She looked at the clock and saw that it was half after nine, and she had not yet eaten her breakfast. But it did not matter much, she thought, as she had not the least appetite; so she sat still and watched the wearied workings of Guy's flushed face, and the nervous twitching of his eyelids. Ten o'clock sounded upon the stillness of the room, and then there was a ring at the door bell. Margaret answered it; and in a few minutes the watcher heard her maid-of-all-work's clumsy footsteps coming up the stairs.

"I suppose some of my customers have come for their costumes. I have not a dress finished, though," soliloquized the modiste.

Margaret stepped as softly as her clumsy feet would permit toward her mistress, and whispered, her eyes fixed upon the sleeper's face:

"There's two men down stairs—detectives, mam, I think they be—they want Mr. Guy Rumford."

"Did you not tell them that he was sick in bed, and unconscious, Margaret?"

"No, mam! I told them there was no such gentleman

lived here, mam, sure! I told 'em they must a made a mistake in the sirname, mam. Then they said, says they: 'We'll have to search the house; he's tryin to hide from us!' Plaze do came right down, mam! The're jest at the fut of the stairs, as impatient as wild bastes, mam! I thought they was coming right up after me, when I told 'em I would tell yez to come down and see 'em!" and Margaret cast a frightened look upon the unconscious Guy as she turned, hurriedly, and went down stairs to tell the waiting men that the lady of the house would be down directly.

Mrs. Withington followed her domestic down stairs; and in the hall encountered two formidable looking detectives.

"There's a young man here that's a clerk in Dunn & Fairweather's, mam. We want to see him!"

"But the young man is sick in bed and unconscious!" gasped Mrs. Withington.

"You can't play no games on us, mam. We've got to see him, if he is sick."

"Will you have the kindness to tell me your business with him? Perhaps I can attend to it. I am his aunt!" and the dressmaker's voice trembled with poorly concealed fright.

"We've got to see him ourselves, I tell you, woman! sick or well, dead or alive! so you may as well tell us where he is first as last!" and the officer grew red in the face, and shook his fist menacingly by way of impressing his statement more forcibly upon the trembling woman. She did not know what to do. Miss Forbes was still sound asleep, and both Guy and Pansey unconscious. She was just the same as alone, and even worse; and utterly powerless to defend her sick nephew from these rough

men. See him they would before they left the house, they told her. At length she spoke :

“Gentlemen, you are police detectives, I see, by your uniform, and you say you must and will see my nephew ! Now I am alone and helpless to protect him, but I am telling you the truth when I say that he is very ill in his bed upstairs and under the influence of a sleeping potion given by the doctor. But I will lead the way to his room, and to satisfy yourselves, I ask that you follow me as still as you can, for I do not dare to think what the consequences would be, if he should return to consciousness and find detectives in his room.”

This speech, with the addition of addressing them as “gentlemen” to commence with, greatly mollified them, and they promised to make no unnecessary noise in ascending the stairs or entering his room.

She then led the way and they followed. They went up to the bed, and looked upon the unconscious young man, as he tossed around and muttered between his closed teeth some incoherent sentences. They turned away again, and consulted together aside for a few minutes.

Then they motioned for the lady of the house to follow them down stairs. She did so. When they reached the lower hall again, they addressed her respectfully.

“Madame, one of us will have to stay in this house where the outside door can be watched, while the other goes back to report to the house of Dunn & Fairweather, as the young man upstairs, Guy Rumford, is ordered to be arrested by Mr. Dunn for murder of the cashier and robbing of the safe in the very office he worked as assistant cashier.”

She went to the reception-room, in which she had received the detective a few evenings previous for her errand girl, opened the door, and pointed to it for the offi-

cer to take possession ; then she descended the basement stairs and bade Margaret hurry on her things and go for the city doctor.

* * * *

There was dire confusion in the banking-house of Dunn & Fairweather on this bright January morning. Major Dunn and his partner, and the whole force of clerks and employees, were assembled in the cashier's office to behold the victim of a most brutal murder. The first man on the scene was the janitor, who came through into the main room outside this private office, and found the door wide open, and knowing there must be something wrong, or the door would have been closed before the clerks arrived, he went inside, and there beheld a sight that made his hair stand erect.

The cashier lay upon the floor, cold and lifeless, stained with blood, while a pool of the dark purple fluid on the hard wood floor beside him, told that a gory scene and a severe struggle had been enacted the night before. The doors of the safe were also open, and a few scattering bills lay strewn around in the blood.

The janitor at once raised the alarm, and coroners and detectives were sent for. Then messengers were dispatched to both the partners' houses, as it was too early yet for them to be at business.

When they arrived upon the dreadful scene, the confusion among the horror-stricken witnesses beggars description. Major Dunn was the first to discover that the combination had been opened into the vaults of the safe without the use of explosive materials, and he therefore was convinced that some one who knew how to open the safe, and who thoroughly understood the combination, must have been the robber and murderer. He picked up the blood-stained bills that were scattered around the

body, some of which had lodged upon the door of the safe, and looked carefully around for traces of the instruments of death used upon the murdered man. He saw something partially concealed under the side of the safe, although it had been evidently thrown there in haste, without thought by the ruffian who had committed the deed. He picked it up, and saw that it was a fine linen handkerchief spattered with the life-blood of the victim upon the floor.

It had evidently been taken in haste to wipe the blood from the fingers of the murderer, as the spats indicated this fact very plainly. He took the handkerchief and brought it out to the light and passed it to a detective who had overlooked it himself in his examinations for some criminating proof to assist the jury in finding a verdict later on. The detective examined it, and seeing some mark in one corner, smoothed it out carefully and held it up to the senior partner. "Guy" was worked in blue silk embroidery. Major Dunn showed it to Mr. Fairweather, and for the first time noticing that the assistant cashier was not among the other employees, at once made out a paper for the arrest of our hero. Then one of the officers returned from Mrs. Withington's, bringing the intelligence with which the reader is familiar regarding his experience in the sad case.

Both of the partners listened to the recital of the detective's story; but each with widely different feelings regarding it.

Major Dunn looked at Mr. Fairweather with a hard, cold sneer, his brows firmly knit; which expression his partner very well knew how to interpret.

"This, then, is the young man of your choice. One considered so far above the common level of clerks that he

was invited to the grandest reception ever tendered in America to an English peer."

There seemed to be no doubts in Major Dunn's mind regarding Guy's guilt, and he went as far as to say that there was no possibility of its being any one else who had murdered their cashier, whose body had just been removed from the office by the authority of the coroners.

"You speak as if already sure that the assistant cashier were the one guilty of this dreadful deed, Mr. Dunn;" spoke the junior partner, with a very grave face.

"I don't see how there can be much doubt about it under existing circumstances," replied Mr. Dunn. "There are only four of us who have keys to this office, and there is no evidence that the lock was picked, and then he was left here, or came back here at my request, to assist the cashier in the evening after regular business hours."

"Yes; but you forget that the door might possibly have been left open as the janitor found it this morning, sir."

"Never! Mr. Fairweather! That is something I have never seen since we were in this place of business. I have absolutely forbidden it, and they both very well knew that if they left this door open, at any time, the consequences would be the discharge of the one who did it, and it made them all careful who had occasion to enter here. Then there was an unusually large deposit known to be in this safe last night. Who, but some one acquainted with the workings of the combination, could have opened the safe without tools or explosives?"

Mr. Fairweather did not know; and he said so.

"Then, again, there is the handkerchief, soaked in blood, marked with his first and very uncommon name," continued Major Dunn, coughing vigorously, and getting quite red with excitement. "He has a very high sound-

ing name for a poor clerk, and I have sometimes thought it likely to be an assumed one."

Mr. Fairweather winced a little at the unexpected mention of the name he himself had been the cause of Guy's assuming, and he began to fear that it had been a bad blunder on his part, as things had turned. But for a moment he never suspected Guy Hurlbert guilty of this foul crime.

"Well, Mr. Dunn, that handkerchief does not confirm his guilt, even if he is guilty; and then the money and checks are yet to be found, you may arrest him on suspicion, but only a trial will settle the question of guilty or not guilty; and even then by purely circumstantial evidence," spoke the junior partner, with poorly concealed emotion.

At this juncture the young collector entered the office for the first time that morning, and seemed very much surprised and alarmed on seeing the confusion which still upset all business in this house.

"You are rather late this morning," spoke Mr. Fairweather, looking somewhat sternly at the collector, who had always seemed to be his especial aversion among the employees.

"Yes, sir," promptly spoke the young man. "My father was very ill last night, and I went down to see him, and stayed up with him nearly all night, sir. This is why I am late. Has anything happened, sir, that all the clerks are in here, and the place in such confusion?"

The junior partner informed him what had happened, and then asked:

"Do you not live in the house with your father, then? You spoke of going down to see him."

"No, sir. I live further uptown than he does. They are downtown a long way, and I don't like there very well. Then my own mother is dead, and his present wife and

I don't get along very well together, sir. So I've been away from home since I was thirteen years old; but I go to see father and my half-brother sometimes, and when he is very sick he always sends for me," and the young man went to the coat-room to deposit his things.

At last order was restored, and the clerks went to their different desks to take up their tasks as best they could after such intense excitement. Jasper was not among the number now, as he had refused to enter his stepfather's banking-house since that unhappy altercation the night after giving bail for Pansey.

Major Dunn detailed two officers to keep a close watch upon the house in which Guy lay ill.

Mr. Fairweather was appointed for the time being to the post of cashier, and he tried and partially succeeded in restoring order and system—or a semblance of it—to the day's business.

The collector came in, bringing checks and bonds, and took them to Mr. Fairweather. He had never been allowed to deposit money in the safe by the late cashier, and was not supposed to understand the combination.

"You can deposit your collections, Furgeson; I am just at present too busy to do it myself;" and he handed them back to the collector, who went directly to the safe, worked the combination like an expert, and deposited the bills in the vaults. Then he returned to the cashier *pro tem.* to receive his next orders.

"Suspicion is pretty strong on Guy Rumford in this murder case, sir, I see by the afternoon papers. That handkerchief will go pretty strong against him, I suppose," ventured the young man, who had stepped outside the bounds of his place in thus addressing his employer.

"What do you know about the handkerchief, young man? There is nothing said of it in the papers, and I

have read them all," and the junior partner turned, and looked sharply at the bewildered collector.

"I—I—thought—I read it, sir—that—is, in one of the papers; I don't remember which one, now."

"I tell you I have read the account in every afternoon paper, and not one of them mentioned the handkerchief. It was carefully locked up in less than five minutes after it was discovered, and long before you made your appearance in the office."

"Well, if I didn't see it in the paper, it may be I heard something said about it by some one here. I must have heard it mentioned, or I could not have known about it."

There came an excited knock on the door of the office, and Mr. Fairweather told the collector to open it, at the same time noticing that he had turned very pale. He did as he was bidden, and when the door opened, Florence Fairweather fled past him, and rushing up to her father's outstretched arms, fell into them, sobbing as if her heart would break. And yet no word had been spoken between them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TERRIBLE NEWS FLIES.

The shocking murder was soon, in every household, the subject of comment, and Guy Rumford's name heralded over the entire country as the accused felon.

The particulars, familiar to the readers, which were considered criminating circumstances, were emphasized by double exclamation points, in the headlines of the newspaper accounts, and newsboys shouted it at the tops of their lungs through the streets and public buildings.

The little city doctor had read it, and then sat for half-an-hour thinking his own thoughts, which were soon resolved into action for the defense of his patient and the arrest of one whom he believed to be the felon.

The queer old artist locksmith had read it, and then went immediately to the house of Dunn & Fairweather, and obtained an interview with the junior partner.

Jasper Montrose had read it through and through again in his room at a hotel, his heart full of sorrow and sympathy for his friend, Guy; and then he had put on his heavy fur-trimmed overcoat, and gone to his mother; and after they had talked it over together, he went to Mrs. Withington's house, and got permission to see the still unconscious and feeble young man, who was so blissfully ignorant of his unenviable notoriety.

He sat by his bedside for a few minutes, as if in a troubled dream, and then, hearing Pansey's faint and wearied moans in the next room, softly approached the

door and begged the tender-hearted spinster, who was watching beside her bed, to allow him to go in and see her. She bade him enter, and left the room herself, going into Guy's. He gazed into the young girl's face, the rigid pallor of which gave him a painful shock, while a moisture gathered in his pitying eyes. It gave him some relief to be permitted to sit beside her and take her burning little hand in his, as poor consolation as it affords to look upon a loved one raving with delirium. She called his name among her mumbled utterances.

"Oh, Mr. Jasper! please give me the box," and then turning her head to the wall: "Oh, what a pretty ring! and Mr. Jasper gave it to her! Oh, it was such a beauty, Auntie!"

Great beads of perspiration stood upon Jasper's brow, and he groaned aloud in his intense agony. A sudden movement from the delirious girl made him start and grow colorless. She was sitting erect, clinching the shining locks of her flowing hair.

"It is under the pillow, somewhere! that ring. Will you find it, Auntie, for me?" and she clawed among the pillows.

"I will find it for you, Pansey, darling!" and Jasper looked under the pillows, thinking to pacify the raving girl. There lay the little gold locket! He took it up, and went to the window, looking inside. Then he stole noiselessly back to Pansey and pressed a passionate kiss upon her feverish lips, left the house, and went to his stepfather's as fast as a hansom could carry him.

The dressmaker tiptoed up to Guy's room, and inquired if it was not time to give him his medicine. Miss Forbes took out her watch, and commenced to study, and count, and look very much puzzled.

“Has your watch stopped, Miss Forbes?” questioned Mrs. Withington.

“Oh, no! It never stops. I keep it half-an-hour fast; for if I don’t, I’m sure to be late for everything. But I believe this has lost time, five minutes, and I’m trying to reckon just what time it is by the sun. Well, as near as I can calculate, it’s about four o’clock. Yes, it is time to give Guy his medicine. He’s a deal better than he was when I first waked up. But it’ll be dreadful when he knows all we do; I’m afraid it will kill him outright, poor soul! I hope the doctor ’ll be here when he really does come too. He might be able to save him from goin’ into fits or somethin’ of that sort!”

“Maybe the Lord will be merciful, and take him home to himself, before he knows the terrible disgrace that awaits him. It is doubtful if he ever has his right mind again!” groaned the distressed Mrs. Withington.

“It seems the doctor is lame, Mrs. Withington. I noticed he limped a good deal when he walked the floor last night in Pansey’s room. He seen somethin’ that was under the child’s pillow. It dropped down on to the floor when I shook ’em up to make her head more comfortable. ’Twas a locket—a gold locket—with miniatures into it. I said, says I, ‘I think somethin’ fell down, doctor!’ and he picked it up, and limped over to the gaslight, and turned up the burner. Then he exclaimed, sort of frightened, like and says: ‘My God! It is Leonard Hurlbert!’ and came back and looked into the girl’s face; and said: ‘Yes, this must be Leonard’s daughter. Where have my eyes been all these months?’ and then he said somethin’ about her bein’ a thief, and said it couldn’t be.”

Mrs. Withington sprang to her feet, and stared at the spinster.

“Who can he be to know Leonard Hurlbert? *Where is the locket, Miss Forbes?*”

“Under her pillow again; I put it back after the doctor had gone.”

They went to Pansey's bed together, and gently moved the restless girl, and looked underneath the pillow. No locket was to be found. Then they took the patient out of the bed, and one of them held her carefully, while the other went over the entire bedding; but, as is usual when a thing is gone, their search was fruitless.

“Where *can it be?*” gasped Miss Forbes.

“You are sure you put it back?” questioned her friend.

“Yes; I *am* sure I did. Maybe the doctor took it since, though.”

“Did you tell Guy about it, Miss Forbes?”

“No, I didn't. I was afraid 'twould make him worse; and now I know what I do about this other dreadful affair, I'm powerful glad I held my tongue,” replied the spinster.

“This girl must be Olivia, then! I remember Guy said he put a gold locket on her neck when the missionary took her away. Dear! dear! how dreadful it all is! One of Leonard Hurlbert's children accused of theft, and the other of murder and robbery. I feel as if I was in a terrible dream. What next will happen heaven only knows! But neither of these dear children are guilty, their heavenly Father knows that; and we know it! but how is their innocence to be proven?” and the terrified woman rocked herself to and fro in despair and wretchedness.

“There, don't be so distressed, poor soul! I believe the Lord 'll bring it out all clear and plain. Sometimes he does, I suppose! I wish he would make it clear about this little doctor that knowed John and Leonard Hurlbert and their father and mother. Yes, and he said he knowed

me, too ; but I was so changed he couldn't have told he'd ever seen me before. Ah, I have it now, I guess ! It must be that young man who used to entice John off into drinkin' saloons, and was so intimate with him. But, then, he wasn't lame as I know of, either ; but that was five-and-twenty years ago, and he may have got lame since then. Yes, and reformed too ! Yes, perhaps !" and the spinster wiped the tears on her bright bordered handkerchief.

* * * * *

Jasper went immediately to his mother's room, on entering the house, in a great state of excitement.

"What has happened, my son ? You look as pale as death itself. Has anything new occurred since you left here at three o'clock, my boy ?"

"Yes, mother ; a great deal has happened. Will you come with me into Mr. Dunn's library ?" for Jasper had ceased to call him father since that night after the court.

He led the way downstairs, and was followed by his mother, marveling all the way at her son's singular excitement.

"Mother," he exclaimed, going up to an oil painting, hanging over his step-father's desk ; "whose portrait is that ?"

"It is Mr. Dunn's daughters, and our Helen's mother, my son ! Why do you ask ?"

For answer he took out the little gold locket that he had taken from under Pansey's pillow, and touching the spring, handed it to her. She looked at the face, and then at the one hanging upon the wall.

"It is Helen's mother's portrait. Where did you find it, my son ?"

"Under Pansey's pillow, mother, about half-an-hour

ago," and both mother and son dropped upon the sofa together.

"Helen has appeared against her own sister, then, beyond doubt, and accused her of theft," and the good lady groaned aloud, her heart burdened with grief.

"Let me see ! let me see !" she spoke at length, meditatively. "Their name was Hurlbert. Yes ! Hurlbert ; and I have never dared to breathe it in Helen's presence or her grandfather's. He forbade that, years ago, when he took home little Gracie to our Chicago mansion, the first year of our marriage."

"Gracie, did you say, mother ? Gracie ? You mean Helen, do you not ?"

"No, Jasper. Her name was Grace Helen ; and as they called her by the first name at home, Mr. Dunn would not allow her to go by it. He was afraid her brother might get a clue to her in some way."

"Was there a brother, too, then ?"

"Yes ; the brother was a few years older than Helen ; and no one knew what became of him or this little sister, or cared, I fear. I am sure your father did not care, Jasper."

"Do not call Mr. Dunn my father ! I can never recognize him as such again !"

"Shall I take the locket up and show it to Helen, and tell her where you found it, Jasper ?"

"Yes, mother. It must be all over between Helen and me now. I think even she herself will desire it to be so, after all that has happened. I have found out my own heart, at last. I love Pansey, the errand girl, with my whole being. I am, and have always been since I met her for the first time in the hallway, a helpless slave to this passion. Heaven knows I have fought it with all my strength. I have tried to be honorable to Helen, too !

But it was all as useless as to attempt stopping the speed of a locomotive by standing before it on the track. I have never spoken freely of my feelings before, mother, not even to you ; but I feel that I ought so to do now. I know your kind heart will not upbraid me for this weakness. No, it is *not* weakness, either ; it is *strength*. Do you think this cruel mystery of the ring will ever be explained, mother ? How could it have gotten in Pansey's satchel ? Oh, fate is cruel ! cruel ! cruel !" repeated the almost frenzied Jasper, in despair.

His mother tried her best to console him, directing his thoughts heavenward for hope and consolation in this dark hour ; and in a degree she succeeded.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

Before our hero had regained consciousness the little city doctor had proven to the firm of Dunn & Fairweather that another than the accused assistant cashier was the undoubted murderer and robber. It happened in this wise :

On the night of the murder he was called to the house of one so-called Ferguson—who was none other than the "landlady's husband," where Mike Malony and his wife died—to dress his wounds, which were the result of an encounter of some kind that night. He came home in such a frightful condition that the woman he lived with was terrified, and as had been her habit of late, she called in the city doctor ; for which service she had always, from choice, paid two-thirds price, as she had said she was not dependent

upon charity for medical treatment. The man was so badly bruised that he lay on the bed in a stupor when the doctor arrived at the house, about two o'clock in the morning. He examined and dressed his wounds, most of which were on the head and arms, and sat down by the bed to write a prescription, when he looked upon his patient casually, and observed a white handkerchief protruding from his pocket, with blood stains upon it. The woman was busy preparing some hot drink for the man, and was looking in another direction, and so the doctor pulled the handkerchief from his pocket, and as he did so, a key fell out. He picked it up, and wrapping the stained handkerchief around it, put it in his pocket. Soon after this the man returned to consciousness, and at once put his hand to his pocket, with a nervous, hasty movement. He did not appear to find what he was searching for there, and so thrust his hand into his other pocket. He looked very anxious, and called to the woman to come to the bed, where they talked in a half whisper together. While they were thus engaged, the door opened, and a young man came in, walked up to the bed, without noticing the woman, except to roughly push her aside, and calling the man "dad," asked him to give him back his key and some money, as he "had promised it to his girl," apparently regardless of the fact that doctors have the sense of hearing and natural curiosity. Then the man explained that he had, in some way, lost the key; but withdrew a large roll of bills from his pocket, inside of his coat, and counting out a certain sum, handed it to him. The young man counted it over, and looked disappointed. Finally, he told his father he must have more—not less than five hundred dollars; for his girl had been promised a seal-skin sack for a birthday gift. The man reluctantly gave him what he asked for; and during further conversation which followed between father and son, the doctor learned that

the young man was employed as collector for the banking-house of Dunn & Fairweather.

He had suspected foul play from the first, and therefore felt justified in securing the stained handkerchief and key, which proved to be the chincing evidence to warrant his arrest and incarceration until called for trial. The artist locksmith was called upon, and he said he was ready to testify in court that young Ferguson had the key—found by the doctor in the man's pocket—duplicated from one he brought to him a few weeks before.

The above statements, as taken down from the doctor's story, were listened to by Mrs. Withington and her grand-niece and nephew, with tears of gratitude. They had so far recovered as to be told of their kinship; and now the only link lacking to make their happiness complete, was their sister Grace; for Jasper had withheld the knowledge he possessed from the invalids, lest the shock might be too severe for their weakened nerves. Pansey was still unable to leave her room, and Guy had not returned to business, and so the brother and sister and grand aunt, with the doctor and Miss Forbes, rehearsed their afflictions and providential escapes from death and imprisonment together with thankful hearts. Helen was still very ill, and therefore it would be a long time before Pansey would be called to court for a trial. But she could scarcely believe Jasper when he assured her that the proud young lady would never bring the case into court. Sometimes it was all he could do to keep the secret he held from the innocent young girl he loved so tenderly; but he bravely kept his resolution, till it was revealed in another and unexpected way to her.

Mr. Dunn and Jasper have come to an understanding, and he is back at his stepfather's house, who seems a good deal broken down and out of sorts. With the fidelity of a

brother, Jasper does all in his power to make the fast failing Helen comfortable and cheerful; but the stinging knowledge of what she has done to her only sister, constantly preys upon her, and she appears as if there was something still withheld, which gave her a deeper feeling of remorse.

One morning, a few days later, when Guy had gone out to take the fresh air (for Mr. Fairweather will not hear to his attempting business again until he is strong and well) Mrs. Withington and Pansey sat together in the latter's room, speculating as to how that ring could have come in the satchel. Mrs. Withington literally broke down with sobs and nervousness when Pansey said dubiously that even if Miss Dunn did not compel her to go to court, some would always think her guilty, and that to rest under such implication would be trouble enough to break her heart. "But then," she added, "when life—this hard life—is over, and it will not be long to that day, this sad mystery will all be cleared up."

As she ceased speaking, and with closed eyelids rested her head upon the back of her chair, Margaret dragged her clumsy feet up over the stairs, and entered the room.

"There's a gentlemen down stairs to see yez, Pansey; Misther Montrose, he says his name is. He says can yez go down stairs, or shall he come up to your room?"

The invalid colored slightly at the mention of her lover's name, and grew considerably excited.

"Can I go down, Auntie, do you think, without danger?"

"Perhaps so; if Margaret assists you. I only wish I was strong enough to help you down; but I feel so miserable that I scarcely think it best for the young man to come up here. I fear I should break down altogether if I should see him to-day."

Margaret did her best for a support, and Pansey reached the lower floor in safety. With a silent press of both her trembling hands Jasper received the pale and agitated girl.

"Pansey, my darling, can you go with me in a carriage to my house and see Miss Helen? she has sent me for you, dearest."

"For *me*? Sent for *me*, did you say?"

"Yes, Pansey, for you!"

"Is she ill, Mr. Jasper? that is, I mean is she worse than she has been of late?"

"Yes, dear; she is dying, we fear, and says she cannot until she sees you. Can you come with me, Pansey?"

"Oh, yes! I *must* go to her, if she is dying, and wants to see me. Yes; I must go!"

She called Margaret, and sent her up to bear the tidings to her aunt, and bring down her wraps and hat. When she was ready, Jasper carried her in his arms and put her in the hansom, which was waiting at the door, and they were driven to the Dunn mansion.

* * * * *

When Pansey and Jasper entered Helen's room, Major Dunn and his wife and her physician were sitting beside her luxurious couch. She was as white as the snowy lace spread upon which her beautiful hand rested. There was a glassy look in her lustrous eyes, and the air was heavy with the odor of roses and violets. This scene was as indelibly impressed on Pansey's and Jasper's brains as if written with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond. She threw aside her wraps and hat, and was led, trembling and pale, to the dying girl's bedside. Jasper approached nearer, and putting his hand upon her forehead, said:

"Helen, here is little Pansey, come to see you."

She raised herself in the bed, with the assistance of the

doctor and Jasper, and then motioned for the former to retire from the room.

Mrs. Dunn asked if she wished to be entirely alone with Pansey? and she replied in a hollow voice :

“No ! no ! I want you all to hear. Pansey, you are my own sister. I know it all, now.”

Pansey shook as if swayed by a tempest, with surprise and fright.

“Then Guy is *your* brother, too !” and every one in that room seemed paralyzed with this startling announcement. “Don’t you want to see him, too, sister Helen ?”

“Yes—later—but I—have—something to say—to you—all—here,—first. Give—me—water and—smelling salts, Jasper.”

They were brought and applied to her nostrils, and a spoonful of brandy, in place of the water, given her.

“Bring me that ring, Jasper, and send at once for brother Guy—if he is my brother,” and her eyes looked strangely bright and large, shining from the marble framework of her face. Jasper sent the despatch to Guy, and brought the ring to Helen.

“I put this—ring—in—Pansey’s satchel ! Do you—all—hear—me ? I did it—because I was jealous of her. May—God—forgive me ! I did it ! *do you all hear ?*” she repeated, slowly, falling back exhausted upon her couch ; and then asked for more brandy.

The shock was so terrible to all her listeners that none of them appeared to have strength to move. But Jasper was the first to grant Helen’s request for brandy, which he gave her in a spoon, with as steady a hand as he could command. Then she took the ring in her wasted hand, trembling with weakness and agitation, and held it out to Pansey. “There, take it little sister, and Jasper, and be happy !” and Jasper’s dream flashed through his brain in an instant.

She laid back upon her pillow, turned her head to the wall, drew a deep breath, and life was all over for Grace Helen Hurlbert. And just then Guy entered upon the scene of death, too late to speak one word to the sister he had so longed to find.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BROTHERLY AND SISTERLY CONFIDENCES.

The terrible revelation made by Helen Hurlbert nearly unmanned Guy ; while Pansey wept for days and nights, refusing to be comforted.

Guy had toiled and waited and hoped against hope that some day he should see his dear sister Grace—the sister Grace of his boyhood, pure, innocent and unselfish ; a sister to be loved, honored and adored. How had his long cherished idol crumbled into dust after all these years of patient waiting ! Nothing can be more crushing to our hopes than the knowledge that our near kindred have proved unworthy of our devotion. Grace was the one sister he had especially longed to find. In a degree, the unexpected discovery of his baby sister, Olivia, had filled the aching void in his great, unselfish heart ; but the circumstances connected with that discovery were so distressing, and they were all so harrassed with distracting doubts and fears just at that time, that her identity seemed more like a dream than reality. How often it is the case that when we finally reach the object for which we have striven years, we only find it to lose it the next instant ; or else we are so worn and weary with the delay, that it is as nothing to us !

Mrs. Withington, with her grand nephew and niece, came home from the sad and hopeless burial of Helen, their hearts filled to overflowing with grief. They sat down to their evening meal silently. Neither Guy or Pansey could taste the tempting dishes Margaret had prepared for them with such thoughtful care.

Mrs. Withington alone made an attempt to reward her cook by eating a few morsels from each dish, and drinking her coffee.

Brother and sister made a brave effort to force back the tears that sprang unbidden to their eyes, and choked their utterance. For their dear aunt's sake they conquered the strong desire in both their hearts to rush into each other's arms, and give way to the storm of grief that was surging within them.

Guy was the first to speak, after they had quit the table and repaired to the little sewing-room, where they had so often talked over family affairs when Olivia was known only as the dressmaker's errand girl; although as dear, almost, to their hearts then as now.

"I can never forgive myself, Auntie dear, for my wicked speech about Helen that night after the Vanderwater reception. How little we know what daggers our words may prove, to pierce us through and through when it is too late to recall them. Oh, why are the things we wish most to know hidden from us? When I think that all these months I have been in the employ of my own grandfather, associated intimately with one sister, and often seeing and speaking with the other, it seems as if it must all be a dream and it is dreadfully disappointing."

At this juncture he arose, and fled quickly from the room, and to his own chamber, as he had done on the night Pansey was taken away to the station-house. He was utterly helpless to control his emotions, and in the privacy

of his room he gave vent to such a tempest of grief as only those strong natures, like his, can comprehend.

Pansey looked after him, with her great sympathetic eyes, and when she heard his footstep upon the last stair, burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping herself.

Mrs. Withington took her in her arms, and tried to soothe her, as she would have pacified an infant.

“Oh, it is all so dreadful, Auntie ! I would rather never have known how that ring came in the satchel. I would rather have taken the blame, and been sent to prison, even, than to have known that my own sister had done such a terrible thing. So long as I was not guilty I could have borne my sentence, no matter how severe, better than this !”

Sobs shook her frame like convulsions, and her aunt was so terrified at her vehemence, that she called Margaret to go for the city doctor, fearing she might work herself into a frenzy of madness, from which it would be impossible to call her back to reason and hope.

On hearing this order from her aunt to Margaret, she struggled to regain her self control, and begged that Mrs. Withington would not send for the doctor.

“*I will* be more calm, Auntie, dear, for your sake. It was very wrong of me to give way to my feelings. Sometime, I hope, when I get older, I shall learn self-control, as you have learned it, and as you always exercise it, when great trouble comes upon you.”

At this juncture, fortunately for both these sorrowful hearts, Miss Forbes appeared at the workroom door, and asked if she might come in.

She had many a time before been a welcome visitor, but never more so than now. She always brought with her the balm of consolation when her friends were in trouble ; and now her dear, homely face seemed to the weeping

aunt and grandniece like a burst of sunshine. They half forgot their sorrow, and greeted their visitor with kisses and embraces, which caused the spinster's heart to leap for joy. Nothing was so grateful to Miss Forbes' heart as appreciation from those she loved. It was meat and drink for her to feel that she was necessary to some one's happiness, and that her presence could cause their faces to light with pleasure. She had won her way to the hearts and confidence of this entire household, and since she had known them, her own life had seemed more worth the living.

On this occasion, she very adroitly refrained from alluding to the sad event which had so unstrung her friends, but commenced at once to speak of the trip she proposed taking the ensuing summer, and in which she had decided they all must join. The good soul had noticed the errand girl's tear-stained cheeks, and evident effort at self-control, and knew at once that any allusion on her part to Helen's dying confession, would only open afresh the bleeding wound in Pansey's heart. All this planning for a summer journey was impromptu, born of her desire to divert the two sorrow-stricken ones thoughts into a more healthy channel.

"Where is Mr. Guy, Pansey? Olivia, I should have said," inquired the spinster, with as steady a voice as she could command, for the recollections that the city doctor had awakened within her of withered and blasted hopes had greatly unnerved the lonely woman. She stifled every appearance of emotion, having practiced self-control until it had become second nature. It was all for the sake of her afflicted friends that she left her room that night, and came alone to their humble home to talk about a summer sojourn at Mount Desert. She had not so much as thought of the subject half-an-hour before she entered the little

sewing-room. She thought—and rightly, as it proved—that discussing this subject (so foreign to their thoughts of late), would divert their minds from the grief that seemed consuming the hearts of brother and sister.

“Brother Guy is up in his room, I think, Miss Forbes,” replied Olivia in a trembling voice. “Shall I call him?”

“I wish you would. I want to talk over my plans for next summer with you altogether. I’ve made up my mind that I shall take you all along with me down to Mount Desert,” answered the spinster, curtly.

Olivia went to call Guy, and Mrs. Withington replied to Miss Forbes’ last assertion that she should “take them all along.”

“I think that will be altogether too much of a burden, my good friend;” and added, “Mount Desert is such a fashionable society place, it seems to me we should be out of place there.”

“I should like to know if we can’t be as fashionable as the rest of ’em, Mrs. Withington?”

“Perhaps you can; but Pansey and I cannot. We have not the requisite wardrobes, Miss Forbes,” replied the dressmaker, with a sort of forced smile playing over her pale and wrinkled face.

“That may be; but it won’t take long to have suitable clothes made. The stuff won’t cost such a terrible sight; and you can make ’em yourself, for that matter. You ought to be able to; you’ve rigged out a good many other women to shine in summer resort hotels, that’s certain. It seems to me, Olivia—I declare, it is the hardest work for me to remember her new name—has been gone a good while. I guess Mr. Guy’s called her in his room;” said the spinster reflectively.

Meanwhile, brother and sister were sitting side by side

in Guy's room, together shedding the bitter tears of regret and unhappiness. Guy had drawn her into his room as he opened the door in answer to her timid rap. It seemed such a relief to them both to be where the anxious eyes of their aunt could not watch their grief, and be made unhappy by it.

"But, brother Guy, I have not yet told you what I came up here for," spoke Pansey, at length, drying her tears, and choking back the sobs as best she could. "Miss Forbes is down in the sewing-room, waiting to see you. Can you not come down with me, brother, dear?"

"Presently, sister. But I wish to speak with you first, dear, about a more important matter. I trust you will not think me abrupt if I ask you a very delicate question, Pansey," and Guy put his arm gently around her slender waist, and drew her close to his heart. "May I speak, sister?"

Olivia opened her round eyes wide with wonder at his strange question, and bade him tell her what was in his mind, adding that he was her rightful adviser.

"Pansey, child, do you love Jasper Montrose? That is, so far as you know your own heart?"

At this straightforward question, the young girl blushed crimson, and her heart gave a sudden throb, which startled Guy at its violence. Then the color all forsook her beautiful face, and her whole frame trembled with a strange and unconquerable emotion."

"Oh, dear brother Guy, must I answer that question to-night—now—I mean?"

"Do not be afraid to confide in me, dear child. If you do love him, it is nothing you need feel shy about with me, your brother and protector. I wish to know the truth; because, dear, he asked me a few days before sister Helen died, if I, as your protector and friend—not knowing then that I was your brother—was willing that he should

try to win your love, with the hope that some day you would be his wife."

"Oh, brother, dear, I am afraid I do love Jasper! But he was so kind to me when I was in that dreadful prison, and has always done so much for me, ever since that first day I saw him in grandfather's house, when I was a poor, unknown errand girl. How can I help caring for him, Guy? I try so hard not to; but the more I try, the less able I am to forget him," and Pansey hid her face upon her brother's shoulder, as if guilty of some foolishness that she ought to crush out of her heart.

"Why, my dear sister. I do not wish you to cease loving Jasper Montrose. I only wanted to learn your real sentiments regarding him. Continue loving him, if you choose. You could scarcely bestow your affections upon a more worthy young man than he has proved himself to be. I am sure he tried bravely to be honorable, and do what was right by sister Helen. I cannot help thinking that all would have been different if our good and conscientious aunt down stairs had trained her, instead of grandfather Dunn. But let us not dwell longer on that unhappy subject. Now that I have asked, and you have sincerely answered my question, let us go down to Miss Forbes, who I fear is already impatient for our appearance in the sewing-room." And here brother and sister went down stairs together.

When they reached the sewing-room door, a messenger boy rang the bell, and Guy, being so near, opened the door.

The lad bore a note for Pansey, which he delivered to Guy, saying there was not to be a return answer by him.

On receiving this message from her brother's hand, which she noticed shook a little as it touched hers, her heart beat tumultuously, and her voice sounded tremulously

in Guy's ears, as she told him that she would go to her own room, and read it there, while he went in to Miss Forbes and his aunt. She at once surmised that this message was from Jasper Montrose. As soon as she entered her chamber she dropped into the little rocker, beside the table on which the lamp stood, and with nervous haste, tore open the envelope, and read as follows :

MY DARLING PANSEY :

Several days ago I asked permission of Guy Rumford (who has proved to be your brother) to try and win your love, which I now know is the fondest hope of my life. I can tell you my feelings and thoughts better in writing than by word of mouth, just now, and considering the terrible shock we have both just passed, it seems more fitting that this silent messenger should bear you the burden of my heart, than that I myself should intrude upon the sacredness of your family's grief, so soon after the blow has fallen.

I tried to wait, dearest, until a proper time for calling upon you and the others, before telling you what was burning in my heart for utterance ; but the delay seemed impossible, and I ventured upon your dear, generous and sympathetic nature, far enough to tell you my love in this way. May I hope that you will try and learn to return my love ? I dare not think what the consequences of your refusal to grant my prayer would be. It seems now, as if I could not endure life without your precious presence to sweeten and bless it.

I thought once, dearest, that I loved your sister, whom we have together just followed to Greenwood. I know now that it was a boyish impulse, born from our having been brought up together from early childhood. The first *real* passion that ever thrilled my being was for you.

Pansey, dear, can you understand me? Perhaps you are too young and inexperienced to fully comprehend my meaning, or return my ardent love; but will you try, my precious treasure, to give me the hope that some day I shall win your heart? If I am only assured of this, I can wait patiently and bravely your time. I know that you are too good and true and noble to consent to be my wife, unless you can give me your whole heart with yourself. If you do not fully understand my meaning, go to your brother Guy, and he may be able to explain it to you more clearly, and he will give you good advice. I would sooner die than take any unlawful advantage of your trusting, innocent heart, and I would not address these words of love to you now unless I had the permission of your brother and natural protector.

Think over all I have said to you in this letter; think as calmly and understandingly as you can, and do not allow a sense of gratitude for what little service I rendered you when in trouble, to influence your decision. But, let me add, I shall not cease to hope and pray that you will try very hard to give me the love I so much crave. I should have told you what was in my heart several months ago, were it not for the unfortunate engagement with your sister, and I felt that until she released me with her own free will, I was bound to keep my promise, even though it broke my heart and wrecked my life.

And now, dearest heart, good-night. May God keep you in safety from every harm, and help you to decide rightly and according to the impulse of your true and generous heart.

Your loving and ever faithful,
JASPER.

After reading this lengthy effusion over three times,

with continually increasing interest, and a throbbing heart, which plead the young man's cause better than the head he had asked her to use in the decision of his fate, she kissed the closely written pages, slipped it under her pillow, bathed her tearful eyes in cold water, and went down to join the others in the sewing-room.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PANSEY'S ANSWER.

The next day our heroine was too ill to leave her room, and it was only by a superhuman effort that she arose and dressed herself. What she had gone through for the past few weeks was enough to upset the strongest nerves. Perhaps if Jasper had realized how unstrung she was, he would have waited longer before sending her that note, so full of passion and pathos. But youthful love is so impulsive and hard to control, that he had started it on its way before he gave himself time to reflect regarding the consequences of his impetuosity and abrupt confession upon the young girl he so idolized. But as Pansey has freely and wholly forgiven him for this rash act, let us, kind reader, emulate her example.

She refused to see even Miss Forbes that day, who came down to renew her unfinished and oft interrupted conversation regarding a summer vacation trip. The young girl was very unlike her former self, the disappointed spinster thought; but she kept her own counsel as to the cause—or causes—of this unnatural state. She knew nothing whatever about the note from Jasper. Pansey had kept this

secret from all but her brother, who had promised to talk the subject over with her when he returned home that evening.

Mrs. Withington carried her up all the dainties she could produce, for which Margaret racked her brain in the cuisine art; but it was only to reward her aunt's and the cook's kindness that she tasted of them.

"Is your swallow afther growin' up, child, that yez can't ate a solid mouthful of anything?" asked the disappointed maid-of-all-work, as she took away the tray, which was quite as heavy as when she had set it down before the invalid.

"I trust not, Margaret," sighed Olivia; "but I feel too ill to eat. Auntie and you are so kind to prepare me all these dainties, that I feel as if it looked ungrateful in me not to eat some of them."

"The preparin' of 'em is a small mather, Miss Olivia," returned Margaret, respectfully. "It's only concerned for yerself that I am." And the good soul bore the tray in her red and trembling hands back to the kitchen, with a disappointed face, and then went into the sewing-room to tell her mistress her fears regarding the young girl upstairs.

The dressmaker quite agreed with her maid that it was best to consult Guy about sending for the city doctor again. She had already spoken to her grandniece about the necessity of medical advice; but she had begged her to do nothing of the kind, saying that all she needed was quiet and time to *think*—"A very bad notion," the anxious woman declared it to be on Olivia's part.

But with all the girl's thinking, she could not arrive at any definite purpose; or even come to an understanding with herself. Human hearts and emotions are as inconsistent as they are ungovernable, sometimes. All the variable and remarkable happenings of the past month danced and

pirouetted together in hopeless confusion before her dazed brain.

She arose cautiously to her unsteady feet, and crept slowly to the window, through which the afternoon sun was slanting its welcome rays. "Why need all one's troubles be heaped upon them at once?" soliloquized our heroine. And yet, was this last surprise, which had seemed to puzzle her brain more than all the rest, a trouble? If she had consulted her heart, instead of her head, and paid heed to its dictates, her "trouble" might have proved less burdensome. But frail humanity has ever carried burdens that were imaginary, when they should have been cast, according to the Divine command, "upon the Lord."

She began to grow impatient for evening, and the return of her brother. Somehow she felt, silly little puss, that he was the only being who could settle the knotty question Jasper had propounded in that note, satisfactorily and safely. But if he had decided averse to her own feelings! What then? This thought crossed her mind as she sat there looking toward the southwestern sky and the slowly sinking sun. And then there seemed to be a sudden revulsion of desire for Guy's decree in this delicate subject of the heart. Absorbed in thought, she still sat watching the sun, till he made his bow and disappeared below the golden glory of the winter sky.

"It will not be right to show even my brother, Jasper's letter. No! I must not do it. And yet I wish I was sure that what he wrote me was all right and proper. I wonder if that is the way other men ask the one's they love to marry them." Thus, she soliloquized, while her eyes seemed riveted upon the fading splendor of the western sky.

"The only way for me to do now, I see plainly, is to pray for wisdom and courage to answer him aright; unless the Lord directs my steps, it is useless to move. He will

not direct them, unless I ask Him ; and I must be willing that His will, and not mine, shall be done !” she whispered, softly, to herself, and then dropped upon her knees, as she had done in the old tenement beside Mrs. Malony’s death-bed ; and later, in her cell at the station-house, calling fervently upon Almighty help and strength.

As in those other extremities, so now, she arose from her knees, assured of the Divine benediction. She no longer harbored doubts of Jasper’s sincerity ; she was no longer wavering as to her own affection for, and confidence in him. She longed to see him, and reveal all that was in her heart ; to confide in him, and weep out her sorrows upon his breast. But her mercies now so loomed up before her mind, that her troubles seemed light and easy to bear. What a difference the grace of Christ the Lord can make in our trials ! “Cast thy burden on the Lord and He will sustain thee.”

Olivia found this promise true, as thousands of others have, and will, till the end of all things shall come.

The young girl arose and left the window, went to her table, and lighted the tiny lamp which had done service ever since she came to her grand aunt’s house, took out her small writing-desk, and sat down to reply to her lover’s letter.

She had gotten thus far ; but what should she do next ? How commence it ? How tell him, on paper, what was in her heart ?

She dipped the pen in her inkstand, and then held it, waiting for an inspiration, until the ink had dried. Cupid seems to be a very stupid muse when he attempts to direct the pen in some hands. Again she dipped her pen, and again held it in her small tapering fingers until the purple fluid dried. The third time she had made up her mind what she would write. Patient reader, if you will look

with me over the writer's shoulder, there will be no necessity for my repeating her words.

DEAREST FRIEND JASPER: Come to me to-morrow evening, and I will tell you all. I know now that I feel toward you as you desire I should.

Ever your loving

PANSEY.

Are you dissatisfied at her feeble answer? Not so was the recipient of the precious missive—if it can be dignified by that name—the next morning when the postman handed it in at the window, while the Dunn family were seated at the breakfast table. Those few childish confidential words gave him greater joy than anything he had ever before received in written form.

It was a difficult matter for the impetuous young man to wait until evening, and he went through the streets that day humming, softly, the old song:

“ 'Tis evening brings my heart to thee.”

Pansey had told Guy who her message was from, and its purport; but said nothing about his reading it. She received no chiding from her noble brother, when she told him the answer she had made to her lover's lengthy epistle. On the contrary, he told the much excited girl that he was glad she had thus allowed her heart to govern her actions; and that the young man would receive a hearty welcome from him, and the assurance of his consent, when he came that evening.

Over their meeting, and its happy results to them both, we will draw the curtain of privacy, and turn our attention to a startling event which occurred three months later.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A SURPRISING CONFESSION.

Three months have come and gone since the scenes narrated in the last chapter took place. On this particular day the morning papers contained a very sensational article. The newsboys, glad of something exciting enough to increase their sales tenfold, shrieked at the top of their lungs, through the streets and public conveyances :

“Great confession of George Ferguson, the murderer. Oh, extra ! ho, extra !”

Doors and windows flew open in private dwellings and places of business. Major Dunn and Mr. Fairweather, Guy and Jasper, and the little city doctor, were all eagerly scanning the papers to find the one article for which they had purchased them. Every headline ended with half a dozen exclamation points. Correspondents were telegraphing this confession to their papers all over the country, and the excitement beggared description.

The real murder of the cashier of the house of Dunn & Fairweather had been tried, found guilty, and was in the Tombs awaiting his sentence, while his son lay in jail under conviction of having been his father's accomplice in the foul crime.

THE CONFESSION.

“As I am about to stand before my judge at a higher tribunal, I am at last moved to make a confession of my real name ; and in giving the world a true statement of the cause of the crime, I hope to lessen the weight of guilt

resting on my unfortunate son in the eyes of the community. My bona fide name is William Dunn. I am the son of Major Henry Dunn, of the banking-house of Dunn & Fairweather, by his first wife. He is now living with his third, as I have learned since my return to America. My father, doubtless, still supposes me in Australia, where he sent me years ago, after I had committed a youthful crime, for which he paid, to prevent exposure and imprisonment. My father has always been a harsh and unrelenting man, and when I came back to this country after a banishment of twenty years, I dare not go to him and ask for forgiveness; and supposing him to still be in Chicago, I came to New York city, and here married the woman who was the mother of my unfortunate son. She has since died, and I have lived in criminal relations with the woman who was called my wife at the time of my arrest. I have two children born out of wedlock by this woman. After having lived here three years, I discovered that my father was the senior partner of the firm above alluded to, and I determined to get my son in the house, that he eventually might secure some of my father's vast wealth.

"At my request, my son was successful in procuring Guy Rumford's keys, one day when he had stepped from his desk and left them on a ring with other keys.

"I also instructed him to learn the combination, which, with no common shrewdness and tact, he accomplished. He had the keys duplicated, and afterward laid them back upon the assistant cashier's desk, in his absence.

"I selected a dark and stormy night, met my son by appointment outside of the tenement in which I lived, and we went together to the bank about midnight. Neither of us knew that the cashier had stayed over after business hours, and we entered the bank and proceeded at once to his office. There was no one there when we entered, and

the gas was still burning very low by the safe. There was a linen handkerchief on the assistant cashier's desk, and my son picked it up and saw that it was marked "Guy." I suggested that it would be well to leave this handkerchief near the safe, that the guilt might be fastened on that young man, and avert all suspicion from my son. I held it in my hand when we went over to the safe together, and my son commenced to work the combination. At that moment, the cashier came from the coat-room, as I suppose, to turn out the gas before leaving the building; and finding us there, attempted resistance. I had no thought of committing murder when I entered the building, God knows; but what was I to do? Either I must use the weapon of defense I had, and kill him, or be exposed, and finally imprisoned, as well as my son. I thought it best to run my chances of being caught as a murderer, rather than stand the sure detection if I let the cashier go. And so it was that I committed the terrible deed.

"I do not confess with any expectations of mercy from the judge in my sentence to-morrow, but that my son may not bear his father's and largest share of the blame; and also in the hope that his sentence, and the justice of law, may be tempered with mercy, in consideration of these facts. More than a year ago, I attempted to enter my father's house, when I learned he was abroad, and I knew there was only his step-son at home to defend his family; but I was prevented from effecting my purpose by that young man's giving the alarm to the police. But I escaped their vigilance, and was never found out in that crime.

"The above is a truthful confession of the condemned criminal,

WILLIAM DUNN, alias
GEORGE FERGURSON.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

EFFECTS OF THE SHOCK.

Major Dunn was taken to his residence the night after the murderer's published confession, stricken and helpless. Repeated nervous shocks had at last brought the determined and self-willed man to death's door, and he was forced to surrender, and acknowledge himself broken in health and spirits. All his domestic plans had failed, except, indeed, that he had made choice of an excellent woman for his third wife. The one grandchild whom he doted upon, had brought only sorrow and anxiety, while the other two despised ones, had proved to be the true gold, refined in the crucible of poverty and affliction.

He had endeavored to thwart his step-son in his desire to study art, and had crippled him by withholding his money and compelling him to delve in a banking-house office to no purpose ; he had robbed his wife of her rightful dower, and used it to amass a fortune which would now be of no benefit to himself ; he had banished his daughter, and broken her heart with cruelty ; and, but for the mercy of the great and beneficent Father above, all her children would have perished through his neglect. And last of all, his only son had proved a felon and murderer. It was, indeed, a terrible panorama to pass in review before him in his last hours on earth.

His faithful wife and aggrieved step-son stood by his bedside, and listened to his agonized self-upbraiding with saddened hearts, and vainly attempted to offer consolation.

“I have been hard and cruel to you my patient, uncomplaining wife, and I have wronged you, my son. Do you forgive me?” he moaned, in his weakness and helplessness.

He was assured of their forgiveness, and was asked if he did not wish to see his grandchildren, Guy and Olivia, as it was evident he was fast sinking, and had but a few hours to live.

“Do you think they will come to me? I, who have neglected them when they were helpless for a mere foolish prejudice against their father, whose blood, after all, was far better than mine.”

“Oh, yes, father! I am sure they will come to you at once if it is your wish,” answered Jasper. “Shall I send for them?”

“Yes, my son—my abused son! my deeply wronged son!” send for them; and for Mr. Fairweather. I want to ask forgiveness of them all. It will be too late soon! Send at once!”

Jasper obeyed, and then after giving the despatch to the messenger boy, returned to the dying man’s side.

“I have never made a will, wife. Death has always looked a long way off from me; and I have thought but little of being prepared for it in a spiritual or temporal sense. It is too late now.”

“No! no! it is never too late to ask God’s mercy. We are all sinners before him, and must all have his pardon before we can meet him in peace,” sobbed the stricken wife.

“I mean—it—is too—late—for—a—will!—but—you must—and—will—I know, all—do what is right by each—other.” He gave a sudden gasp and was gone. Too late to ask the forgiveness of his grandchildren. But let us hope, not too late to receive mercy from the throne of Heavenly Grace.

In a few minutes after Major Dunn had breathed his last, Guy and Pansey—to call the latter by the name with which we have become familiar—entered the chamber of death. They were ushered in by George, who did not know that his master had passed away. A strange trembling seized the timid young girl, as she looked upon the dead face of the man she had learned to dread when living. And Guy bowed his head in respectful silence as he stood over the quiet body of his grandfather.

He had been too late to speak a parting word to his sister Grace, and now he had come too late to utter the words of forgiveness that welled up in his great, generous heart to his grandfather. Life seemed a tragedy to this chastened and subdued young man. For generations, on both sides, it had been the same. He could recollect nothing in his short life or family history that had been like other peoples' as he thought. But alas! how little we know of the silent tragedies in other people's lives.

Then Mr. Fairweather came, and had brought his daughter Florence, to offer her aid to the distracted wife and grandchildren of his dead partner, and the flush of daylight had appeared in the east ere they reached their own homes the next morning.

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After the funeral ceremonies were over, Mrs. Dunn insisted that Mrs. Withington, with her late husband's grandchildren, should come to live with them, and take possession of the wealth which she considered would be their rightful dower when the estate was settled. She had such unbounded faith in Guy Hurlbert's honor that she chose him as administrator; which, as it happened, was the best thing for herself. Guy made over every dollar of the property owned by his grandfather to his wife, except his

interest in the banking-house, which was a fortune in itself, and which he and his sister shared equally.

* * * * *

Miss Forbes is a frequent visitor at the house of this now united family, for Mrs. Dunn gave the dressmaker and her two charges such a welcome, and would listen to no arguments from them against sharing her hospitality and Jasper's, that they have settled down, and decided to feel at home. The forlorn spinster is much subdued, and more quiet than when we last saw her. The fond memories which were awakened by the little city doctor on that sad night when the errand girl lay tossing in unconsciousness, have wrought a perceptible change in the talkative maiden lady. It may be that the trials through which her friends have passed, are yet too fresh in her memory to admit of her usual badinage and loquacity.

She called one evening, a short time after the burial of Major Dunn, and requested a private interview with Guy. He received his old friend with a hearty welcome, and told her it grieved him to see her so sad and unlike her former self; adding, that in the future, when it was decided that they were to have a home of their own,—that is, his aunt, his sister, and himself by themselves,—he should insist that she made one of their number, and allow him to take all the financial responsibility upon himself. He said her kindness to him, and those he loved, could not be repaid by a life-time of devotion on his part, and that he was only waiting for a chance to serve her.

She thanked him sadly, in a broken way; and then said she had something important to say to him.

“I am all attention, my good friend,” was his answer.

“May I ask, without bein' impudent, if you care anything in particular for Miss Fairweather, Mr. Guy?”

Taken thus by surprise, he flushed crimson, and hesitated a moment.

"As you are my true and tried friend then, Miss Forbes, I will be frank, and tell you that—that—I am afraid I do."

"Don't you see, Mr. Guy, that she is failing every day, and looks as pale as a ghost?"

"I have noticed of late that she has lost some of her former vivacity; but she seems to purposely avoid me, and is so shy and reticent in my presence, that I am led to believe that in some manner I have offended her. She has lost all that charming frankness which she manifested toward me the first time we met. It is beyond my power to understand her; but the thought is torture to me, nevertheless. Life looks a great blank before me, and money, which I have long wished to possess that I might make others happy, has no charms for me, without her love to sweeten life's bitter experiences!"

"Then, why don't you stop all this nonsense, and ask Florence Fairweather to share life with you?" abruptly spoke the spinster.

"Ask her to be mine—my—my—wife? How could I dare do such a thing as that, with her present shyness and evident avoidance of me?"

"I will tell you a secret; perhaps I have no business to, though, and perhaps Miss Fairweather would be dreadful angry if she knew it; but I don't like to see two young folks that love one another made miserable by misunderstanding."

"What do you mean, Miss Forbes? Do you know aught of Miss Fairweather's feeling towards me?" and Guy arose, and going over to the eccentric woman, sat down by her side, trembling with conflicting emotions.

"Yes, I do!" bluntly answered the spinster. "Their doctor, their family doctor boards where I do! and he,

knowin' that I was your friend, asked me if I could in some way let you know that the young lady was pinin' away and dyin' by inches because she believes you don't care nothin' for her, but—"

Guy sprang to his feet, and looked at the woman as if he thought her bereft of reason.

"Dying—because I—"

"Wait a minute, my young friend! I ain't quite through, let me see, what was I sayin' when you jumped up so sudden? Oh! but he said it would mortify her to death to know that anything had been told to you; and I promised him I wouldn't let you know her feelin's till I found out for sure that you cared for her."

Guy got down on his knees before this emotional spinster, and actually kissed her withered and unsteady hands.

"Is it possible that there is such bliss yet in store for me? For me, whose whole life has been nought save tragedy, and whose father and mother, grandfather and grandmother, and sister, died as tragedies end on the histrionic stage. I believe that all the good which has come to me since I knew you, has been through your goodness. It was you who brought my dear little sister to Auntie, otherwise I might have never found her, or known that Major Dunn was my grandfather. What an endless chain has grown from that one small link, the end of which seems hidden in eternity."

The spinster was rocking to and fro and weeping, now, whether for joy, or sorrow, she scarcely could have told. Life had been a sort of unfinished tragedy, or drama, to her also, she thought, as she listened to Guy's burning words of eloquence, which this unexpected revelation had inspired. Guy could but notice, as he saw the nervous twitchings of her withered face, how old looking she had grown within the past few weeks. It must be

heart trouble alone, he thought, that could cause such a sudden change.

"Somehow or other, Mr. Guy, I am gettin' to be a weak old fool. I cry at nothin', and laugh just about as easy," apologized the forlorn woman, seeing Guy look at her with an anxious and puzzled face, while the tears stole down her cheeks. "But I won't keep you here no longer. I've said my say, and my mind's a deal easier now I know the truth about your feelin's toward Miss Fairweather. I hope you'll see her soon, and make it all right."

Guy promised his old friend that he would; and the two adjourned to the drawing-room, where the family was assembled.

CHAPTER XL.

RECONCILED LOVERS.

The parlor-maid brought a card to Miss Florence Fairweather upon the highly-polished silver plate. The young lady, who either was, or imagined she was, in ill health, had kept her room for the past two weeks; in fact, she had not been out since the day of Major Dunn's funeral, which she had attended at the request of her father.

She took the card from the plate with a listless indifference, and as she read the name of "Guy R. Hurlbert," her face flushed a brilliant pink tint. The maid awaited her message with a feeling of awkwardness. She arose, and went to her mirror, and looked at herself. Did any of the anxiety and wretchedness she had for the past week's experienced, show in her youthful face? She could

scarcely remember how she used to look, before the meeting of Guy Rumford Hurlbert had disturbed her peace of mind. She was robed in a house dress of soft amber cashmere, garnished with oriental lace, and tied at the throat and belt with blue ribbons. Perhaps she looked the more charming for the delicate pallor that had crept into her oval face and brightened the color of her violet eyes.

“If I refuse to see him now, he may never come to me again! and then, and *then!* there will be nothing left for me to do, but to die!” she soliloquized, still gazing intently at her reflection in the mirror. She turned and bade her maid tell the gentleman she would be down to see him directly.

In a few minutes she appeared before her visitor, flushed and excited. Both tried to be natural and easy in their greetings; but somehow, they failed ignominiously. Guy looked anxiously into her face, which had grown very pale again after she sat down, and attempted to entertain her somewhat embarrassed visitor. They talked of her health, of his grandfather's sudden death, of the wonderful discovery of their kinship, of the happy recovery of Olivia, of everything but what was uppermost in their hearts. And then, when Guy thought they had come about to the end of their category, he began on Miss Forbes and her evident failing health. Upon this subject he was always eloquent; and when he had told the young lady that she was so broken down by the recent sad happenings, and the memories that the city doctor had awakened of the unhappy disappointment of her youth, his listener's eyes were bedewed with tears.

At sight of those crystal drops upon her drooping lids, he grew suddenly bold, and he went over to the sofa upon which she was sitting, and stood before her, tremulous with this new joy which had taken possession of him.

“Florence, darling!” trembled from his lips; and he opened his arms to her. “Florence, dearest, I dreamed of you when I was a youth of eighteen; on my aunt’s verandah in our little cottage home in Hollywood; you came to me then, and put your hand in mine, and told me you loved me, and took me to your fairy castle and said we should always live there together. I could never forget that dream, nor that glorious sunset; nor the odor of the lilacs and honeysuckle; nor the parting songs of the birds, before I fell asleep over the open page of my algebra. Will you not come to me, now that I plead before you with a consuming passion that death itself can never quench? I offer you my first and only love. A love that I have cherished all these years for that one being who came to me in dreamland, and whose memory has staid by me ever since; who shortened the long days in the banking-house, when I little dreamed that its senior partner was my own grandfather, and when I thought I should be forced to battle with poverty, perhaps, all through my life.”

At these last words, she arose and held out her hands to him, her cheeks flushing crimson.

He eagerly seized her proffered hands, drew her to his heart, and with burning kisses and tender caresses, that wonderful youthful dream was re-enacted in real life.

But we must not tread too familiarly upon hallowed ground. And so we will leave this hour of bliss and new-found joy to the lovers alone, while we turn our steps to the late Dunn mansion, and see what our other young lovers are doing.

It is hardly possible to define this young ex-errand girl’s emotion, as Jasper pleads his cause before her. The impulsive young man can see no reason why Pansey should persist that she must go to some seminary, and perfect herself in all that pertains to a thorough education. He

pleads that he is not yet perfect in his art studies, and that he shall be a student in Paris, or Naples, or Milan, for several years, and that he must have her with him, to make life endurable in a foreign country. Although this sweet young girl loved Jasper Montrose with all the ardent impetuosity of youth and her own affectionate nature, she realized and appreciated the fact that her education and society manners must be cultivated before she would be at ease in the circles among which she would necessarily have to move, as one of the heirs of the late banker, and the wife of Jasper Montrose. Her position was so thoroughly changed, in such a sudden and unexpected manner, that she could scarcely realize herself to be the same being. It sometimes seemed to her that she was happier in the old days, when nothing was expected of her but to do what she was bidden by those who had charge of her. Even when with Mrs. Malony, and her earthly possessions consisted of a half-dollar and the gold locket, the talisman through which she found her brother, lover, and a fortune, she felt more at her ease. Perhaps her happiness was not so great, nor of such a subtle quality then, as since she knew and loved this high-bred young man, who worshipped before her shrine of beauty, grace and goodness, with even increasing ardor.

No ; perhaps not. But, alas ! there is always some little thorn, some nettle hidden away amid the alluring pleasures of society life, which appears from its lurking place at times, to sting in the most sensitive place.

She was never made to feel her lack of education and limited knowledge in society ways, either by Jasper or his lady mother. They both regarded her sensitive feelings as sacred ground, upon which they must never rudely tread.

"Isn't it hard that we have to do just the things in this life which hurt us most, Jasper, dear ?" questioned Pansey,

looking wistfully at his perplexed and serious face—which perplexity and seriousness were caused by her persistence in refusing to comply with his wish for an early marriage—when they were left alone in the library that evening.

“Is it true, then, my precious one, that being separated from me hurts you more than anything else that could happen to you?”

“Yes, Jasper, dearest,” she answered, coloring deeply, and shyly slipping her restless little hand in his.

“Then I shall be repaid for making the great sacrifice of letting you go to follow out the path you feel so sure is a ‘necessary evil’ to all our happiness. I fully appreciate your feelings, darling. Your life has been so full of work for others, that you have never had time to perfect yourself in what society seems to demand of those who move in it.”

He pressed her to his heart with a thrill of joy born of her shy confession of devotion to himself, and promised her not to put any more barriers in the way of her ardent desire for an education.

CHAPTER XLI.

A SUMMER OUTING.

“Come, hurry up, Mrs. Withington, or we shall be too late to catch the boat. Death and steamboats don’t wait for nobody. For my part, I thought I’d be the one that would lag behind—I’m getting so old and stiff-jointed like,” spoke our spinster friend to the dressmaker, who was floundering around amid a pile of handbags and lunch baskets, counting them over and over again, to see if everything they intended to take on their journey was there. She had all her life been so burdened with the care of every undertaking for herself and family, whether it be preparations for a funeral, a pleasure journey, or a business trip, that it was now impossible for her to give up to the willing servants, who would have gladly shouldered the responsibility.

It was a momentous and exciting day to Mrs. Withington. She was about to start for the very shores where, thirty years before, she had experienced the one romance of her life. The party, including Mrs. Dunn, Mr. Fairweather, his daughter, the spinster, Mrs. Withington and Olivia, which latter was freed from her school studies by the long, summer vacation, had started for a six weeks’ sojourn at Mt. Desert. Guy remained at home to “keep the pot boiling” (as he put it) at the banking-house; and Jasper Montrose was in Milan, waiting for the remaining two years to expire, which would bring him the consummation of his fondest hope.

At length, the whole party were gathered together, the trunks strapped and sent ahead, and the family coachman waiting upon his box for our travelers to arrange themselves in the capacious covered barouche, which was to convey them to their starting point.

It was a warm afternoon in July, and the blazing sun was still high, for it was but little after four o'clock when they left the house, and thoughts of a trip down the Sound gave them a delightful prospect. What a pity it should have to be spoiled three-quarters of an hour later, when they arrived at the boat landing, and found themselves too late to obtain a state-room of any description. Perhaps some of my readers will understand the true inwardness of their unhappy situation; but not one of this party of travelers did; simply because they had never spent a night in a Sound steamer, on the floor of the ladies' cabin, in the delightful company of fifty crying babies, one hundred loquacious women passengers, and the continual intrusion of their better halves, coming in to inquire if they "can manage to sleep any way comfortable."

Mrs. Withington and Miss Forbes received the verdict of no state-rooms, with comparative composure; while the latter, with a decisive shake of her waterfall curls, informed her friends that "there was the ladies' cabin, which would be *almost* as good as a state-room."

Poor soul! she changed her mind, when she entered that place later on, and found it swarming with tired and disgusted-looking passengers, beseeching the self-important stewardess to put their names down for a mattress, or begging her to intercede with the purser in their behalf for a state-room.

"I don't know what I was thinking of," dubiously spoke Mr. Fairweather, casting a perplexed look upon their pile of traps on the cabin floor, "not to have secured state-

rooms before the time of our departure! I never even dreamed of such a crowd as they have stowed away on this boat to-night."

"Well, papa, we must make the best of a bad dilemma, for aught I can see. It will be a novel experience to bunk on the floor. I should think it might be something like camping out," remarked Florence.

"I should say it was more like camping *in*, for my part," spoke up Miss Forbes.

Olivia wisely withheld her opinion till she had tested the novel situation by a night's experience, which two hours later, they were all putting to practical test perforce.

"I guess none of us'll ever be fools enough to start on a tower ag'in, without bein' provided with state-rooms beforehand," ejaculated the spinster, as she carefully laid aside her curls and front-piece in the depths of her capacious hand-satchel, for she was much more afraid of some other woman's getting hold of that precious head adornment in the dim light of the early morning departure, than of losing her pocket-book—of which latter she never thought until the steamboat express train was nearly half-way to Boston from the terminus of the boat line.

The grand saloon floor was devoted to sleeping quarters for the gentlemen, who had, either by oversight or ill-fortune, been doomed to make the journey without the comfort of state-rooms. Mr. Fairweather took his dose of disappointment as cheerfully as possible amid the clamor and hubbub of complaints that were poured into his ears from all sides.

But let us go back to the ladies' cabin and listen to the distracting jumble of female voices, which actually drowns the throbblings of the monstrous engine and the creak of the steamer's shaking timbers.

Miss Forbes' head, divested of all its superfluous hair—which means about all she possessed, dear old soul—had finally landed at its rather uncertain port, the floor; for she had been the last one served by the sable servants of the steamer to the scanty sleeping conveniences provided for such unusual jams as afflicted our travelers that night.

She tried her head on many different places of the mattress, only to decide that it was composed altogether of sharp corners, which irritated her denuded head beyond endurance. She arose and steadied her distorted frame upon one elbow, and called softly, lest she should disturb her fellow-passengers, to one of the colored men servants.

"What's wanted?" demanded a rather snappish voice, while its owner walked toward her over scores of prostrate forms.

"A pillar! *That's* what's wanted!" replied the irate spinster, savagely. "I don't know's the rest of the heads round here are any better'n mine. I seem to be the only one that hain't got nothin' to lay it on but a hard mattress, though."

"The pillers is all give out, mam. You ought'r looked out for yerself befo' they was all took. It's too late now, mam."

"I'm always too late, it seems!" sighed the much aggrieved woman. "Why don't the company pervide pillers enough, if they are goin' to take on such an ever-lastin' crowd of folks, and charge full prices for makin' 'em oncomfortable all the way to Boston?"

"Nobody complains about it but you," saucily retorts the servant.

"Yes! that's jest the reason this kind of accommodation goes on. Everybody's afraid to say their soul's their own to a rich steamboat company. For my part, I think it's

outrageous," and Miss Forbes flourished her right hand tragically at the now grinning colored man, forcibly hitting a six-months old baby, which was rolled up in a shapeless wad beside a soundly sleeping woman upon the next mattress.

The baby responded to this salute by a lusty shriek, which awakened its mother and half-a-dozen other sleepers in the immediate vicinity.

"One might as well try to sleep in Bedlam as here," protested a stout, matronly-looking woman, glaring fiercely at the innocently offending spinster, who was totally ignorant of having pounded the infant with her bony hand.

The child was still shrieking, while its mother, yet half asleep, tried to soothe its distressed and grieved moan.

"What's the matter with the poor little creetur, mam?" inquired the "innocent cause of the rebellion," in a half whisper.

"I'm sure I don't know," answered the mother. "I think, though, he must have had a bad dream, poor little dear!"

At this juncture, the colored man and the waking passengers, who had seen the effectual flourish of the spinster's hand, gave way to a roar of laughter.

Olivia, mistrusting that her awkward friend had committed some ludicrous blunder, which caused all this merriment, arose from her mattress, the head of which was against the entrance door to the cabin, and carefully felt her way over the sleepers—if there *were* any such then—to where Miss Forbes sat, still wondering in a bewildered manner at the convulsive laughter she had provoked.

By this time nearly everybody in the outer cabin was awake. A bevy of young people, over in a far corner by one of the exit passage-ways, were laughing immoderately over some ludicrous mishap near them; one woman sat braced against the wall declaring that "the air was posi-

tively poisonous for human lungs ;” and another slept on, snoring loudly, totally oblivious to all the disquietude and temporary misery around her.

“It seems to me this is a foretaste of purgatory, Miss Forbes,” gasped Olivia, dropping down beside her spinster friend, and then breaking into a little rippling laugh, which was quickly caught up and echoed all around the floor.

“You’d better go back to your dog’s nest, and try to get asleep, child,” said Miss Forbes. “You won’t be fit for nothin’ to-morrow, if you keep awake all night.”

“I may as well be awake here as over there,” she replied, pointing to the apology for a bed which her friend had designated as her “dog’s nest.”

Nevertheless, she crept back, and braced her little auburn head against the entrance door again. She had scarcely settled herself to woo the shy Morpheus, when a sudden push from outside upon the door moved her bed from its moorings, and gave her head such a crack that she was nearly stunned.

“You can’t come in that door,” protested the colored watchman. “Go to the next one.”

The other door opened, and a man’s head was cautiously thrust inside, as if its owner was in doubt about the propriety of this intrusion.

Then came a sepulchral whisper :

“Clarrisa ! are you awake ?”

“Yes, John, I *am* ! and likely to be the rest of this dreadful night.”

“Have you got my clean collars in your bag ? I’ve ruined this one, and I thought I had better come and get another to put on in the morning. We have to get up so early and dress in such a hurry, I was afraid there wouldn’t be time to get one then.”

“Clarrisa” got up and fumbled in her bag awhile.

Then, handing her waiting spouse a small package, told him he had better hurry back to the saloon, or he might lose his bed in his absence.

They had scarcely got settled down again, before some one else tried the door against Olivia's head. This aroused her indignation, and she called the stewardess to account for not locking the door to prevent further intrusion.

"I couldn't find the key," apologized that worthy. "Somebody's done loss it, I 'spect."

"This is a fine state of things !" wrathfully protested a worried looking old lady, casting a contemptuous glance around over the promiscuous heads about her.

"It comes the nearest to fulfillin' that passage of Scripiter where they was all together, and had all things common, of anything I ever see before !" ejaculated Miss Forbes, now keenly alive to the ludicrousness of the situation.

The last intruder who had tried the door was one of the officers of the boat, who had occasion to pass through the ladies cabin "on duty," presumably.

He figured in and out cautiously among the "floored" passengers, and seeing a suspicious looking heap beside one of the ladies, timidly asked if there were "any babies around loose, that he should be likely to step on !" adding that he "trod on one a few nights before, and only a miracle saved it from being crushed to death."

Presently the entrance door opened again, and "John's" hoarse whisper sounded through the cabin once more.

"Clarrisa ! Clarrisa ! You've given me the wrong collars. I guess their yours."

"Oh, dear !" groaned Clarrisa. "John, I wish you were in Guiana."

"So do I," answered "John" solemnly. "If we were all there it would be a great relief, it seems to me."

"I do believe there'd be more room to move around in that heathen land than there is here!" spoke Miss Forbes, now shaking with laughter. Then the laugh was taken up and prolonged until the passengers began to think they were getting their money's worth of fun, if every other comfort was denied them.

At last the rosy morning broke, and the steamer was "flopping" around, like a broken-winged butterfly, to make its landing.

The gangway was thronged with surging humanity, plunging toward the waiting train. Women held their babies and other precious packages above their heads to prevent their being crushed to atoms; and there was a constant shouting from those in front, to "stop crowding in the rear!"

Finally all our friends got seated in the long train, and Miss Forbes drew a deep breath, declaring she was "thankful to get off that boat alive."

She had put the ticket required for the train in her pocket-book, which also contained some change; but she was wise enough not to carry the bulk of her money in so precarious a manner. She saw the conductor on his way to collect tickets, and hastily put her hand in her pocket to get out hers, when, lo! there was no trace of pocket-book or ticket to be found.

She told her story with such a dubious look, and emphasized each word so solemnly, that the much hurried and worried conductor passed on and left her explaining, which she continued to do persistently for the benefit and amusement of the passengers, until the train arrived in Boston.

* * * * *

"They *do* say that a bad beginnin' makes a good endin', and I declare to goodness I believe it's true." ^

Miss Forbes was addressing the much-amused Mr. Fairweather and his daughter, while our travelers were comfortably seated in the parlor car on their way from Bangor to Mt. Desert Ferry.

"Was there ever such grand and picturesque scenery linked together as this?" exclaimed Olivia, as she steadied her tottering footsteps upon the back of the spinster's revolving chair, and looked out upon the magnificence of the view which the fast, Flying Yankee was transforming into a gorgeous panorama, past the art of man to portray upon dull canvas.

Off in the distance towered the Camden Hills, glimpses of which our travelers caught between the dark green branches of spruces and pines. Lakes flashed in the sunlight through the openings of the forest, like opal gems set in an emerald circlet. The air was resinous with fir, combined with the delicate fragrance of ferns and hanging clusters of wild roses, which here have blushed to a deeper red than their sisters in open fields and pastures. Lilies pop their white heads above the silver blue waters of the ponds, and timid rabbits, followed by nimble squirrels, leap back into their leafy screens at sight of the iron monster which has intruded upon their solitude.

As they near their destination—or the railroad terminus—the salt breezes greet their delighted senses, and the white cottages of old Sullivan seem sportively chasing the train along its course; and here Mrs. Withington arises from her seat, and peers out upon the half familiar scenes of her girlhood and early married life.

"It is all so wonderful!" she exclaims, "to think of coming to my old home in this grand and luxurious style, when we used to consider it a tedious and almost endless journey from here to Bangor."

The golden glories of the sunset were flooding the head-

waters of Frenchman's Bay as our travelers alighted from the train and followed the crowd to the waiting ferryboat.

"It is all so lovely! and I do not feel in the least fatigued," spoke Miss Fairweather, as she delivered her sun umbrella into her father's keeping, and gazed enraptured upon the enchanting scene. Some lines of verse she had read somewhere, came to mind, and she found herself repeating it to the romantic Olivia, who seemed too much absorbed for speech. There are SOME sacred hours when "silence is truly golden," and yet Florence's voice did not sound like a discordant note upon the young girl's ear, as she eloquently repeated:

Sweet odors float from myriad trees;
And mid the tranquil hush,
Caressed by evening's wooing breeze,
The dew-dipped roses blush.

Singing, the sea comes to the shore
With waves of crystal spray;
And, breaking on a moss-strewn floor,
In whirling eddies play.

Oh, Paradise! so wondrous fair!
Oh, shining sky of gold!
Thy grateful calm, thy fragrant air,
Like wings around me fold!

And now the "Sappho," like a white-winged messenger, is speeding our party over the waters of Frenchman's Bay, which are steeped in the various delicate tintings of the western sky. The Green Mountain range stands out clearly defined against the silver gray of the horizon, and the islands thrust their gigantic forms far out into the bay, like denizens of the forest revelling in a plunge bath.

But now our friends reach Bar Harbor and their chosen hotel, which is nearly or quite, perhaps, half-a-mile from the landing, and as they are in consultation with the clerk regarding rooms, which just then are at a premium, we will draw the curtain of privacy over this somewhat excited interchange of questions and answers.

* * * * *

"I guess I'll take one of them buckboards. I think that's what they call 'em—and ride up to Crow—no Eagle Lake. Does any of the rest of you want to chip in and go along with me."

The managing spinster was totally unaware that Mr. Fairweather had already engaged one of those popular vehicles at one of the stables an hour before—a "board" large enough to contain the entire party. But Mrs. Withington and her grand-niece, whom the spinster addressed, were quite as ignorant of that fact as she was.

They both declared their willingness to join her on the proposed excursion, and the agitated woman went out upon the main thoroughfare of the village, where lounged a posse of drivers, quarter of a mile in length, upon the boxes of their carriages. She stepped promptly up to one of these autocrats of the "ribbons," and, in her usual flurried manner, asked :

"Are you engaged, Mister?"

"Lord, no! Are you?" as promptly returned the driver, eyeing his would-be patron curiously, and idly poking the handle of his whip at the off horse's tangled up tail.

"Well," curtly spoke the spinster, after this brief pause, "then, perhaps as neither of us is engaged, we might strike up some sort of a bargain about takin' a party of four to—to—Crow—no. What is it, Olivia?" turning toward her young companion (who had accom-

panied her on this tour of research) wearing a very puzzled expression.

"Eagle Lake," corrected the amused young lady.

"Yes, yes! Eagle Lake. I shall have to set that down on a piece of paper, and keep it where I can have it handy like," chattered the voluble woman; unwittingly treating the driver to a free comedy, which he seemed to relish exceedingly.

While this little comic scene was being enacted, Olivia turned her eyes toward the street corner, near which they were standing, and saw Mr. Fairweather approaching hurriedly toward them.

"For what purpose is Miss Forbes interviewing that buckboard driver, Miss Hurlbert?" he asked, breaking into a surprised little laugh, that was echoed by our heroine, gleefully.

"I'm tryin' to drive a bargain with the blockhead," caustically jerked out the spinster, taking the answer "out of Olivia's mouth," so to speak.

"Where were you intending to go, Miss Forbes?" ventured the banker, trying his best to conceal a smile.

The puzzled look again overspread her wrinkled face, and she looked helplessly toward her young friend.

Olivia, who understood this mute appeal from the flustered woman, answered:

"She had planned to go on an excursion to Eagle Lake, Mr. Fairweather."

"Ah; just where I have already engaged a conveyance to go this afternoon. So I have managed to get a few hours ahead of you, Miss Forbes. Did you ever have to take a back seat before in your generous planning to make others happy?"

"I don't know as I shall take a back seat now, Mr. Fairweather. That'll depend on who gets the first choice

of seats in the buckboard you've hired for this afternoon, maybe. I never take a back seat if I can be in time to get a forrerd one, that's certain ; but I'm free to confess that I'm beat this time ; and by a *man*, too," added the good soul, giving vent to a little nervous laugh, which really relaxed her fixed features, and made her look ten years younger than she did a moment previous.

That afternoon they all piled into the capacious buckboard—five women and one man, according to the " Latter day Saints " fashion—adopted, perforce, at summer resorts, —and with a sharp crack of Jehu's whip, they are off, in a trice, for the lake, the name of which so mixes up our spinster friend.

As passed the first week with our enchanted tourists, so passed the remaining six. They sailed and fished and rowed and rode ; and, to use Miss Forbes own words, " walked and promenaded " over the seductive tow path, where Florence and Olivia had many covert challenges to a flirtation, when Mrs. Withington and Miss Forbes, who acted as their chaperones, were busily absorbed in watching the sea gulls as they dipped their shining wings in the foaming waves ; or the former lady was attempting to point out the sloping shores of the new watering place across the bay, fair Sorrento.

Perhaps, if these young ladies' hearts had not been already captured,—signed, sealed and delivered, as it were—they might have responded to some of these glances of admiration from the " white-flannel-suit brigade," who rowed dories, or paddled the light canoe, fished or sketched in the immediate vicinity of this far-famed " tow path " on the Back Bay shore of Bar Harbor.

One day, when all the other members of her party had betaken themselves to their rooms to enjoy an afternoon siesta, Olivia slipped on her jaunty shade hat, adorned

with a glistening gull's wing, and stole out alone, for a walk along this path. Only those who have traversed the length of this wild and romantic "chief charm" of Bar Harbor, can imagine its beauty and attractiveness (a description of which would require more space than I have to spare in this chapter).

The young lady wandered on and on, till Ogden's Point seemed near enough to make one's voice heard from its shore. She was absorbed in thought—one thought—it may be truly said; and that thought of the engagement of her sister Grace with Jasper Montrose, on one of the rocks in that bay. She wished that he could be there with her then, to point out the identical spot where they sat together, surrounded by the tide, all unconsciously, two years previous. The different phases of her young and eventful life came up before her like a vivid picture. All their strong situations stood out before her as upon canvas, with one fond object ever in the foreground—Jasper Montrose!

Her hat had fallen partially from her dainty head, and she was nervously pulling in pieces a wild rose which she had plucked on her way hither.

"Pansey!" spoke a voice, tremulous with emotion, just at her side.

"*Jasper! am I dreaming?*"

"Not to the best of my knowledge, darling," replied the young man, and regardless of all the proprieties Mrs. Grundy has marked out, and placed as barriers against such imprudent exhibitions of emotion in the open air, and before darkness has shrouded the earth—he gathered her trembling form in his arms and pressed burning kisses upon her parted lips.

"How strange, Jasper, dearest, that you should come to me just when I was wishing you were here."

"Were you really wishing that, precious?"

"Yes, Jasper."

"Well, then, you see, I answered your prayer sooner than you expected, my own, true heart."

"That is the way my prayers have often been answered before, Jasper—that is, I mean, the Lord has answered them. But tell me how you happened on this side of the Atlantic, and how you knew where to find me?"

"As to the former question: I wanted to come home for a short stay, and surprise you; also to see how you like your school studies, and if you still wish to continue them through a three years course. And the latter question as to how I knew where to find you, I will frankly confess that I naturally supposed your romantic appreciation of the glories of such scenery as this would naturally influence your footsteps hither, when I found that you were not at the hotel, with our other friends. Now, what will you give me, if I will tell you some good news, Pansey?"

"I have not much to give, just at present, Jasper—except—perhaps—gratitude," she replied, shyly looking into his wistful eyes.

"That will do, provided it is accompanied by a—a—kiss from those dear lips, my Pansey," and he bent his head toward her face for answer.

"When you tell me the news, you can have the reward you ask," she replied, with business-like sagacity.

"Ah, you cannot trust me, after all, then! Well, I will fulfill my part of the contract. Guy came down here with me, and will stay to go back home with us when we all are ready to return to New York."

"Oh, Jasper, dearest, that is good news; and you shall receive the compensation you ask; and now let us go to the hotel and find him."

Half-an-hour later there was a joyful re-union on the shady side of the hotel piazza by our party, including the

newly-arrived and unexpected guests, who had come to spend the last week of their friends sojourn, and accompany them home.

They all, now, seemed to be provided with either relatives or lovers, except poor Miss Forbes, whom Guy thought looked somewhat forlorn, and also really mournful, as she sat a short distance from the rest of the happy group, gazing, with moistened eyes, upon the venerable head of Green Mountain.

Our hero was pouring his feelings of sympathy for their spinster friend into the reciprocative ears of his fiancé; and wound up by repeating two verses of that gem of some unknown—to me, at least—poet, entitled, “Alone.”

“Alone! alone in this wide world ;
A wreck upon the sea!
By every shifting eddy whirled ;
No harbor left for me!”

“Alone! alone! is a fearful word
To come from mortal tongue,
To feel so like a crippled bird,
Whose last glad song is sung.”

Although habituated to a stern and uncompromising manner, which made her seem at times void of human emotions, Miss Forbes had her hours of intense, inward longings to be a sharer in the domestic bliss she saw around her; and this was one of those hours.

CHAPTER XLII.

WHAT THE OLD CHEST CONTAINED.

The fleet footsteps of two years have advanced and retreated lightly over the pathway of those in whom we are especially interested.

Guy Hurlbert is now in the full tide of financial and domestic prosperity. The banking-house is flourishing to a remarkable degree; and he is the acknowledged liege lord of the one woman of his choice. He is blessed with a year-old daughter, who perpetuates the romantic name of Pansey, which has at last been renounced by its original owner, who is called Olivia by all her friends except the young artist, who in a week will claim her for his bride. To him she will ever be Pansey—Little Pansey, who sat in the hallway beside a cumbersome box, and captivated his heart with her winsome voice and great, magnetic, hazel eyes.

When she returned from her three years' exile at school, so charming and so accomplished in speech and manner, Jasper felt amply repaid for the long separation. All this time the young man had been devoting himself to persistent study in different Italian cities, and has made a fairly clever artist of himself.

Although the time has seemed short in one sense, and passed lightly to many, it has made great changes to some of our friends. Guy has an establishment of his own on one of the finest up-town streets. Miss Forbes, alas! poor soul! the one who was always doing good and seeking to

relieve the distressed everywhere, has lost nearly all of her snug fortune through the mismanagement of her agent in its investment. Her health is broken down ; but homeless and friendless she can never be.

The only bone of contention is, which of her loving, sympathetic friends shall be privileged to have her permanently as their guest.

Mrs. Withington and Pansey are with Mrs. Dunn, because she cannot be content to live in her home alone, with only Jasper and the servants ; but Guy has, so far, had his way regarding keeping Miss Forbes in his family, for he declares he should never have been blessed with wife and child, but for this honored friend.

Olivia, Mrs. Dunn and Mrs. Withington are living principally amid the airy nothings of Vanity Fair. Silks, laces, illusions, orange blossoms and the creamy tulle for a bridal veil lie heaped in delightful confusion on nearly every article of furniture in the sewing-room. Olivia will allow no one but her beloved auntie to preside over this mysterious outfit.

* * * * *

But let us look in upon a pleasant family dinner party, which is now in progress at the residence of Guy Rumford Hurlbert—the somewhat formidable name by which fashionable society now demands our hero designated.

The charming hostess is beaming with happiness as she presides at the coffee urn, while her lord and master is helping the protesting Miss Forbes to a second cluster of luscious, amber California grapes. Olivia sits between her aunt and prospective mother-in-law, while Jasper is playing, in sober earnest, however, the chivalric to Mrs. Withington. Mr. Fairweather is his daughter's right-hand man ; while the little city doctor (who is now a more than welcome guest in the house of his friends, and who

has been generously rewarded pecuniarily by Guy for his invaluable services in the great murder case at the banking-house) has a seat of honor at the left of the fair hostess on this occasion. And so all these dear friends of yours and mine, kind reader, feast and chat and grow extremely merry over a beverage no stronger than the finest old Java coffee, enriched by Goshen cream. They do not need stimulants to give zest and brilliancy to their conversation.

And, now that dinner is over, let us follow the party into the library, where they assemble, because they all feel most at home in that cheerful room.

Pansey number two is brought in by the nurse to be kissed by her fond parents, before being put in bed for the night; and then each visitor follows the example of the child's proud parents, and each press a kiss upon the little cherub's rosy lips.

The historical old chest of drawers has an honored place in this cosy room; and just at this time, Olivia stands near it, in earnest conversation with Mr. Fairweather and the doctor about their family history, as she has heard it from her brother and grand aunt. A caprice seized her to open it, and look over the rare old laces, so pleasing to every woman's artistic eye. She therefore asked Guy if he would give her the key, and allow her to gratify her curiosity. He handed her the key, and she sat down upon a low stool, and commenced hostilities with the somewhat rusty locks. As they were provokingly stubborn, it seemed necessary that Jasper should come to her relief—which opportunity he did not fail to embrace—although he would have much preferred to embrace the young lady herself. He soon subdued the obdurate lock, and presently the young heiress was revelling amid the antiquated finery, which had been preserved intact during

all the days of poverty and want experienced by her dead parents, as a relic too precious to pawn for bread.

As she shook out the folds of a deep antique lace collar, a small piece of paper, grown yellow with age, fluttered to the floor; and, on looking toward the doctor, she noticed his eyes were fastened upon it with a rigid stare. Guy also saw it, and hastened to pick it up. As he unfolded the ancient paper some lines were revealed, written in blue ink, faded to the faintest tint.

“What is it?” they all exclaimed together, in their excitement; for by this time the entire party had surrounded the chest.

Guy studied awhile, and then read aloud, the following :

To my son Leonard Hurlbert, he being my only surviving son : Look in the left hand corner, inside the till of this chest, for a secret spring which resembles a carved acorn, supposed to be only for ornament.

YOUR FATHER.

He folded the note, and giving it to Mr. Fairweather for safe keeping, they all went to look for the designated spring. The doctor was the first to discover it, and pressing his fingers against the acorn, the spring yielded to his touch, and a drawer flew open. There lay a small package, tied with twine. He took it out and passed it to Guy, his hand shaking as if in convulsions, and making no attempt to speak.

“What can make the doctor appear so excited and unnatural?” thought the surprised spinster.

Guy untied the package carefully, and found two sheets of foolscap, closely written in black ink; and beneath it, the portrait, painted in oil, of a young man in the full dress of English fashion a century ago. He had a handsome, but

rather rakish face ; but a form of which Appollo might have been envious. But as they were all clamorous for the reading of the scroll, the portrait was laid aside, and Guy again commenced to read :

To my son, called John Hurlbert, in the city of New York, United States of America :

As I am about to die and give an account of my stewardship, I make this confession for my children's benefit : namely John and Hannah Hurlbert, so called, and so believed in their native town and county, Worcestershire, England. I am Thomas Rumford, youngest brother of the earl lately deceased. I was a wild youth, and left my home at the early age of nineteen, after getting into trouble, such as wild young English noblemen are prone.

I fled to the Continent and there plunged into all kinds of vices and immoralities, changing my name to that of Hurlbert ; for amidst all my sin and dissipation I held too much respect for my family name to allow it to be disgraced. After ten years of dissipation and recklessness abroad, I came back to my native country and married the woman who is the mother of my children, and sobered down to a bookkeeper's life. When you grew up and had a taste for music, and begged me to educate you for the operatic stage, I was glad that I had continued to go under the assumed name of Hurlbert ; for the Rumford's would have considered it an unpardonable crime for one of their pedigree to go upon the stage in such capacity ; but I feared if you were refused in this hobby, you might follow my reckless example of early youth. Soon after your debut on the English lyric stage, you became famous, and was sought for by Her Majesty's Opera company in London, and as you well know, made the fatal mistake, of course unwittingly, of falling in love with your own cousin, Lady Helen

Rumford, seeing her for the first time in the box with the earl's family.

Soon after this I learned of your elopement, marriage, and flight to America ; and later, you sent for my only daughter Hannah, to join you in New York City. As her mother died soon after, she asked my permission to go to you, knowing I was about to take another wife to my home to fill the place of your dead mother. I gave my consent, and she went.

I enclose my portrait, taken when I lived at home in Rumford Hall, so that in case the present incumbent of the estates and earldom should die leaving no male heirs in England, you, or your sons, might claim your lawful right, that proceeding from noble blood on the male side. Preserve this confession, and in case of your death, leave it where it can be found by your posterity.

This is my dying request, made in full possession of my faculties, and witnessed by the name affixed. Be very careful, my son, that you put this document in a safe place, and ever teach your children to reverence the name of Rumford. I also enclose my marriage certificate.

THOMAS RUMFORD,
alias THOMAS HURLBERT.

EDWARD LIVINGSTON,
Barrister.

As Guy finished this reading, blank astonishment was depicted upon every face in the room, while the doctor's blanched cheeks and helpless agitation, gave the sure evidence that he was the most interested one of the astonished listeners.

“ Well, what does this discovery amount to, after all ? ” spoke Mrs. Withington in a trembling voice.

“ It amounts to this much, my good friend. It changes

Guy's and Olivia's names to Rumford, and establishes the fact that they have no plebian blood in their veins ; and also gives you a share in the nobility on your father's side. It is worth just as much to you all as you choose to estimate it, so far as blood goes ; but it may be of much more advantage in case of the death of the last Rumford in England. Fortunately, in this case, rakish sons and their posterity have the same right to the titles and estates as the other male members of the family. There is no justice in a law, or diplomatic decree, which cuts off a daughter under the same circumstances. But a disinheritance does rob her altogether of the rights of property and family name !”

“ For my part, I should prefer that a son or relative of mine be an honorable plebian, rather than a rakish nobleman,” replied Mrs. Withington.

This opinion seemed to be endorsed by the whole company ; for although they all respected nobility, where it was carried out in the lives of its possessors, they had the true American independence and democratic ideas.

As it was getting late, the party was broken up by the doctor, who said he had a patient which required his attention at that hour and he must take his leave.

When Guy replaced the document he espied another paper, which had before escaped his notice. On taking it out, he found it to be the marriage certificate of his great grandfather's, named in the precious manuscript found in the secret drawer.

CHAPTER XLIII.

WHO THE CITY DOCTOR IS.

Olivia Rumford and Jasper Montrose were united in wedlock at her brother's residence where she had made her home for the past month, performing little acts of kindness and care for her sick and broken friend, Miss Forbes. As such ceremonies are of more importance to the wedded pair than any one else, it is unnecessary for the writer to invite her readers to that wedding, and therefore the husband and wife are now presented in the less poetic attitude of everyday life. While the happy Mrs. Montrose is sitting in her feeble friend's room, a servant calls her outside to her brother, who wishes to speak with her. Closing the door softly on the sleeping invalid, she follows Guy down stairs, and into the library, where their aunt is seated, holding the morning paper.

"What is the mystery, Auntie, dear?" she asked jestingly.

"The Earl of Rumford—the last of the noble line in England—is dead, my little sister, and it is our privilege to prove our titles and claim the estates."

"How do you know he is dead, brother?"

"There is a full account in the morning papers, cabled from London, Olivia."

"Then I have the honor of addressing the present Earl of Rumford, in my noble brother Guy!" and she swept a graceful courtesy.

As she finished this little speech, the porter rapped upon the library door, and handed a card to Guy.

He looked at the name of his visitor, engraved upon plain cardboard, and read aloud: "Dr. John Rumford."

The letters danced and pirouetted before his dazzled eyes, like so many black demons. His aunt and sister stood speechless before him, and the porter watched them all with a frightened stare.

"Who can he be?" at length gasped Mrs. Withington.

"Where is he, William?" asked Guy, addressing the waiting porter.

"In the parlor, sir! I think he's the doctor who comes here to see Miss Forbes, but he handed me this card and told me to give it to you, sir!"

Guy hastened to the parlor to see his strange guest, and was nervously greeted by the little city doctor, looking ghastly pale, and trembling with agitation.

"What does all this mean?" gasped Guy, dropping upon his knees before his excited caller. "Who are you? and why have you never made yourself known before?"

"Call your aunt and sister in, and I will explain all. I have never been asked my name or origin before, strange as it may seem. I have never been called aught but the city doctor! Call little Pansey, dear little Pansey, whom I first found in a miserable tenement, watching with tender care over a dying woman, who did more actual good in her life-time than all the nobility or crowned heads in Europe! Call them quickly, Guy! I haven't long to live! I—I—have but a few hours more to live!"

Guy summoned his aunt and sister, his head reeling

with the intense excitement the doctor's last words had caused.

He entered the room with Jasper, who had read the news of the earl's death, and had left his studio to come to his "errand-girl-countess young wife," as he called her, when he clasped her in his arms on entering the library.

They all stood staring at the doctor, waiting for him to speak.

"Is Miss Forbes able to come down to the parlor, to-day?" he asked, in a faltering voice.

"You are her medical adviser, doctor. We will leave it to your discretion," spoke Guy.

"Call her, then, if you please."

Olivia went up to her room, and finding her awake and sitting by the window, looking brighter and considerably refreshed by her sleep, she prepared her to hear a surprise, and perhaps a heart shock, and the two went down to the parlor together, the spinster leaning on the arm of the young bride.

The doctor arose tremblingly and greeted his patient, and then motioned her to a seat near him.

"Perhaps it would have been better for all concerned if I had died without revealing who and what I am to you all present, but on finding this morning in my paper the account of the death of the Earl of Rumford, I grew excited, and a few minutes after reading it I was siezed with a violent hemorrhage, which I now know must end my earthly existence in a few hours. A great longing siezed me to die known and acknowledged of my kindred, and the woman whom I loved in my youthful, and I am sorry to say, reckless days. I am John Hurlbert, whom you all supposed dead, the elder and only brother of Leonard Hurlbert, and now the nearest heir of the Rum-

ford title and estates. My time on earth is too short for me to attempt to relate my life-experience after I left that hospital, where I was carried when I had my leg broken and crushed under the railroad train, the effect of which I shall carry to my grave with me. But I will say to you now, as a dying man, that I have tried to atone for my misdoings by a life of self-imposed toil among the poor and abandoned. I studied medicine, reformed, and from that day I left the hospital, have never tasted a drop of intoxicating drink. I have never married; but have ever cherished and respected the memory of the woman beside me, and give her my last words of blessing, and have made all my earnings and savings over to her by a will, which I now give in the charge of my nephew, Guy Rumford, who will soon be the legal heir to the Rumford estates in England."

The spinster and Olivia were kneeling at his feet now, sobbing in hysterical agitation. He called them all to take his hand, one by one, after he had been tenderly placed upon the sofa, and his head propped with pillows; and he breathed his life out calmly, trusting and joyful, in the strength and support of the great Redeemer of a lost world, his last earthy gaze resting on the woman whose whole life had been an unspoken drama. But let us draw the curtain on this sad and impressive scene, and leave the bereaved ones alone with their dead.

Six months since the last scene was presented have come and gone. We find Guy Rumford still in America, soon to come in possession of his fortune in England; but he prefers to remain in his native country and forfeit his title. His devoted wife fully endorses his decision, and is very thankful to be near her beloved father in his declining years.

Mrs. Dunn, with Jasper and his wife, are sojourning in

Paris; while Mrs. Withington and our noble spinster friend, remain with Guy in New York ; and just as we are about to drop the curtain, Miss Forbes is holding Baby Pansey up to the mirror and telling her she is the "sweetest creetur in this lower world."

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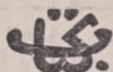
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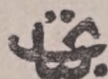
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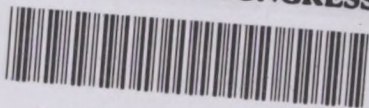
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